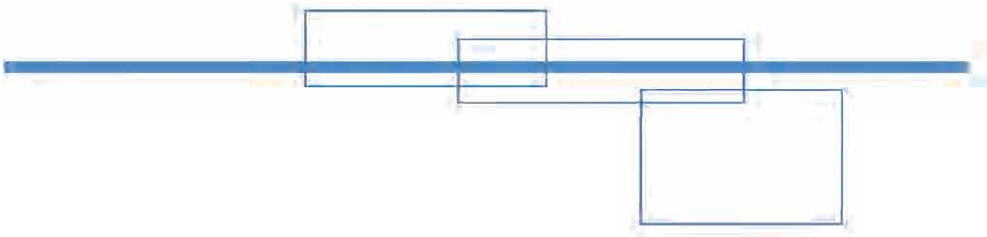
Force
Character Design from Life Drawing

MICHAEL D. MATTESI
THE AUTHOR OF
FORCE: DYNAMIC LIFE DRAWING FOR ANIMATORS

Focal Press



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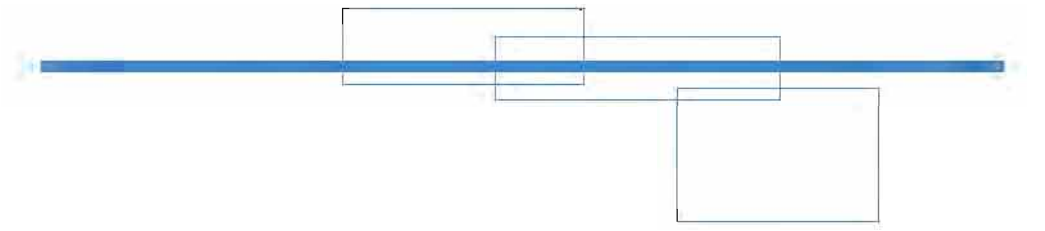

Force

Character Design from Life Drawing

By Michael D. Mattesi

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Focal Press is an imprint of Elsevier

Focal Press

Acquisitions Editor: Georgia Kennedy
Publishing Services Manager: George Morrison
Project Manager: Paul Gottehrer
Cover Designer: Alisa Andreola

Focal Press is an imprint of Elsevier
30 Corporate Drive, Suite 400, Burlington, MA 01803, USA
Linacre House, Jordan Hill, Oxford OX2 8DP, UK

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Application submitted

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-240-80993-9

For information on all Focal Press publications
visit our website at www.books.elsevier.com

08 09 10 11 12 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

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This book is dedicated to all of my students.
Thank you for allowing me to inspire you and watch you grow.
I am so proud of you!

Special Thanks

I want to thank the many people that made this book happen. First off to Paul Temme for finding my first book, *Force: the Key to Capturing Life Through Drawing* and bringing it over to Focal Press. If that had not happened then this book would not exist. To Georgia Kennedy, my editor at Focal, thank you for your trust in my ideas, nothing is more priceless! Thank you to all of the models who work hard to inspire us artists! Speaking of artists, a special thanks to the contributing friends/professionals that took their own time to share with us their insight on character design! Always a thank you to my family for helping me not feel so guilty for the time I lose with you as I work on my books! I love you.

Mike/Daddy

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Foreword

The main thing about character design is that the character, whether good or evil, MUST have appeal and tell a story. Look at pirate drawings by Marc Davis. They have a wonderful appeal and charm even though they are tough guys. The ability to do drawings that have a touch of humor and personality in them is key and something we all strive for. Even if you do a character that is a cliché, you never want to draw an illustrated cliché. You want to keep it fresh and appealing and full of character.

Simply put, if I were going to design a fat man I would study Jackie Gleason and observe how he carries himself, his mannerism, and his way of posing and moving. If I were to design a skinny guy I would study Stan Laurel or Dick Van Dyke and how they carry themselves and how they move. Then I'd study the differences and incorporate the personality traits and back story that are signature to that character. That is character design.

My cartooning heroes were the great sport cartoonist Willard Mullin, British cartoonist by way of New Zealand for the Evening Standard of London, David Low, who Winston Churchill said was worth two battleships during WWII, that's how good he was.

Character design is always about the story as much as the drawing.
Rik Maki

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Preface

The book you hold in your hands is a first of its kind. There are figure drawing books and there are character design books but there is no book that explains the bridge between the two. From my own work experience, this I have found is one very important bridge, a bridge of inspiration!

In high school, I remember refusing to look up reference for the comic books and other art projects I was working on. I thought that was uncreative and cheating. I could not have been further from the truth. In my own professional history, now spanning sixteen years through film, television, and video games, I know that when I am cornered with the lack of an idea or my own repetitive thoughts, I look up reference! The more I know about my subject, the more sophisticated my ideas become.

As I get acquainted with an ever growing pool of professionals in the entertainment industries, I consistently see that the best of them use reference all of the time. This grows the "internal encyclopedia." Without all of this research, your well is very shallow or almost dry. So, with this theory in mind, I will show you in the pages of this book how we can experiment and explore creativity through experiencing the encyclopedia of the figure!

In drawing from a model, you are given a tremendous amount of information to be inspired by. The vast variety of forces, forms, shapes, textures, and colors can keep you intrigued for a lifetime!

Many schools do not instruct their students on how to enjoy drawing from the model or that they have the power and control to make creative choices from the model. In running Entertainment Art Academy, I saw students come from other schools of thought where measuring and pure technical prowess were the forefront to drawing. These students came to me in hopes of enjoying the act of drawing again. There is no right or wrong to figure drawing. You MUST find a way that is enjoyable to you. The drawings you see in my books are MY way of enjoying myself while drawing. Since I am self-analytical, I can teach what I do when I play. Believe it or not, there is method to my madness. These methods and desires are what I share with you.

My first book, *Force: Dynamic Figure Drawing for Animators*, discussed how to understand and experience the organic, rhythmic energy of humanity and translate it in your art. I discussed how the foundation to all creation is honesty. First one must be able to capture basic truth. What do I mean by that? Well, I mean a pure, lucid UNDERSTANDING of

the particular model at a particular time. There is as little opinion as possible. There is only an appreciation and understanding of what you are experiencing in front of you. One of the hardest things to do is be visually honest. Once you understand, you can't help but admire the magnificence of the humanity in front of you.

This book deals with forcing your drawings to become what YOU want them to become. What are your OPINIONS about the subject? How will you tackle realizing YOUR IDEAS?

An invasion of armies could be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come.
Victor Hugo

Opinion of the story in front of you can lead to a clearer truth of the model. In admiring the model, you open yourself up to being more sensitive to what is in front of you. This sensitivity creates opinion.

Learning to draw the figure with opinion leads to many jobs out in the world of entertainment art. The best character designers, storyboard artists, and visual development artists use life as their reference point.

Character is what drives great intellectual properties. Think back to the films or cartoons that really made an impression on you. Characters, not plots, drove them. The clearer the character the more the audience, us, gets connected to the story. Know WHO the character is and why the character is that way. How does this character act in different situations? In Burbank, home of the world's top animation studios, one test for a good character is to put it in a box and know how the character would react to the situation. Would it get scared, frustrated, happy, angry, or curious ...? The choices are limitless. A great character is so clear in your mind that you know how it would act in ANY situation. Mickey Mouse, Bugs Bunny, or Snoopy are all clearly defined. They would all act differently in the box.

The character designer's job is to create the character's morals and thoughts visually on the page. Is this character funny, naïve, serious, aggressive, dumb, etc.? Know its role; know if the visual representation of the character presents it well.

On the following pages you will find drawings that represent my ideas and the fun experiences I had creating them along with many professional artists' experiences.

Key Concepts

There are some basic key concepts to help you with your journey. Let's go through them together.

FEAR

Here I am again writing about fear. I have been teaching an additional six years since the first printing of *Force* and I can honestly say again, that fear is the biggest detriment to the forward pursuit of education. Fear comes in all forms, some more obvious than others. The fastest way out is to listen to your internal dialogue. Notice when and why you are indecisive or concerned. Let drawing be about your experience and curiosity, not final product. You create the fear so rid yourself of it! It will only slow you down.

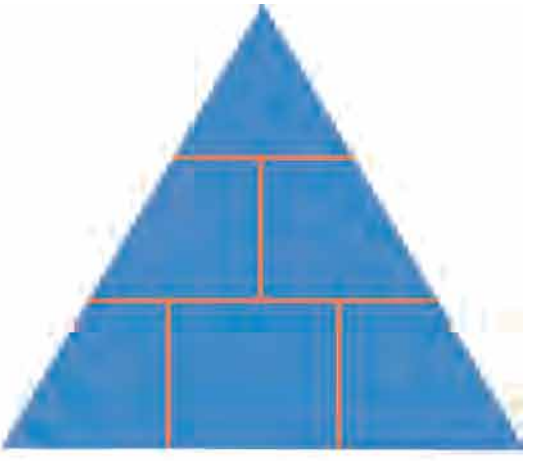
RISK

Well, we just spoke about fear and here we are talking about risk. Doesn't that cause fear? Yes, good fear. What can happen to you if you take a risk and you don't get the results you want? In order to have opinion, you MUST be able to take risk! You MUST fight your fears. You MUST be willing to fall on your face to pursue your creativity! Once you break the bonds of fear, and love feeling risk while you work, you will never turn back. Besides, we are not sky diving, we are drawing Nothing can harm you!

OPINION

Strengthening your ability to take greater and greater risks allows you to get out of the "kind of" factor. New students look at life and "kind of" see it. You must see truth in order to form opinion. Opinions come from heightened clarity! Don't draw with mediocrity, stride for opinion through clarity. What are you trying to say? In my first book, I discuss writing your purpose on the drawing page itself. The purpose in the other book was a concept based on force. In this book, we can bring that concept to creative ideas. You might have a thought that is an analogy. Perhaps the model's pose reminds you of an animal, natural power, architecture, culture, a time period, a character, automobile or other famous artists' work. Draw upon your intuition to inspire your experience.

HIERARCHY



Thinking hierarchically, or from big to small, is a profound method to assessing challenges. Hierarchy creates a clearly defined path that then assists in the comprehension of complex ideas. It seems human nature to initially resist this idea. We want to get mired in the details instead of seeing the big picture. Hierarchy is so profound that you can use it on anything, not just your drawing experience. It could be used to organize your process for food shopping, the flow of automotive traffic, personal relationships, and more.

In drawing the figure, whole pyramid represents the main idea of the pose. Then within it, the top of the pyramid is the biggest idea, and they get smaller as we travel down the levels of the pyramid. So, a pose is the whole pyramid, the top is the hip to rib-cage relationship, the next tier is arms, legs, and head, and then the last is hands, feet, fingers, and toes. As one gets more sophisticated, the top of the pyramid might be the face and right hand because they best represent the main idea or story of a pose.

CONTRAST AND AFFINITY

While working at Walt Disney Feature Animation, one of the best rules I learned was "CONTRAST CREATES INTEREST." Never forget that. Beware mediocrity through the lack of contrast. Look for idiosyncrasies. Watch out for symmetry, parallel moments, and monotonous line. This rule works for character design, landscape painting, film editing, writing, and all works artistic. Contrast is self-explanatory but how many ideas can be contrasted? That is where the magic happens. A line on a piece of paper can have much contrast or little contrast. Is the line parallel to the edges of the paper or is it at a

forty-five degree angle? Is there variety in the weight of the line? How long or short is the line? Does it go off of the page? All of these possibilities represent different ideas in the world of art. Remember that every mark on the page has meaning, a meaning to create the bigger purpose of the artist's statement!

Affinity or unity means pick what repeats in the drawings. Now, with the nude figure, there is the obvious, such as two hands or two feet. In creating character designs and especially clothed ones there can be patterns in shape, color, tone, line, and much more.

Design is an abstract way of looking at our world and using it to communicate our thoughts. Your art is only as powerful as your thoughts and how you communicate them with your skills. I hope to present you with some new tools to assist you in communicating your experiences. Enjoy the journey!

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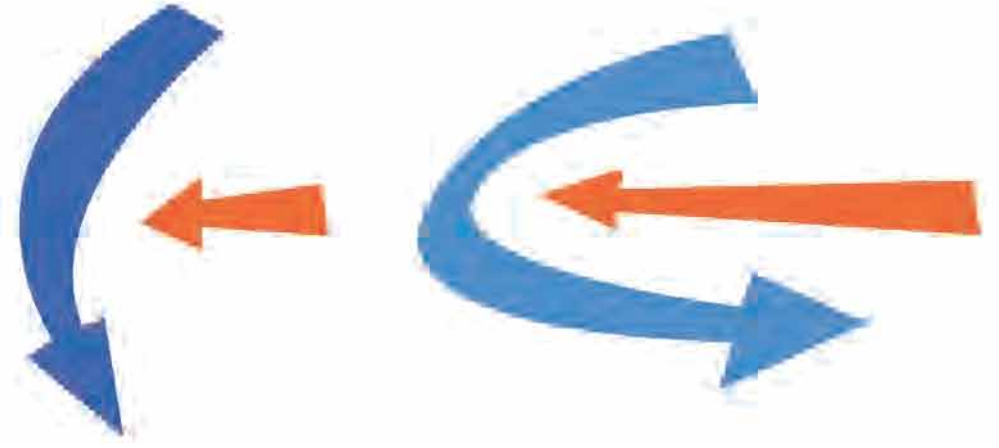
Chapter 1

Force with Character

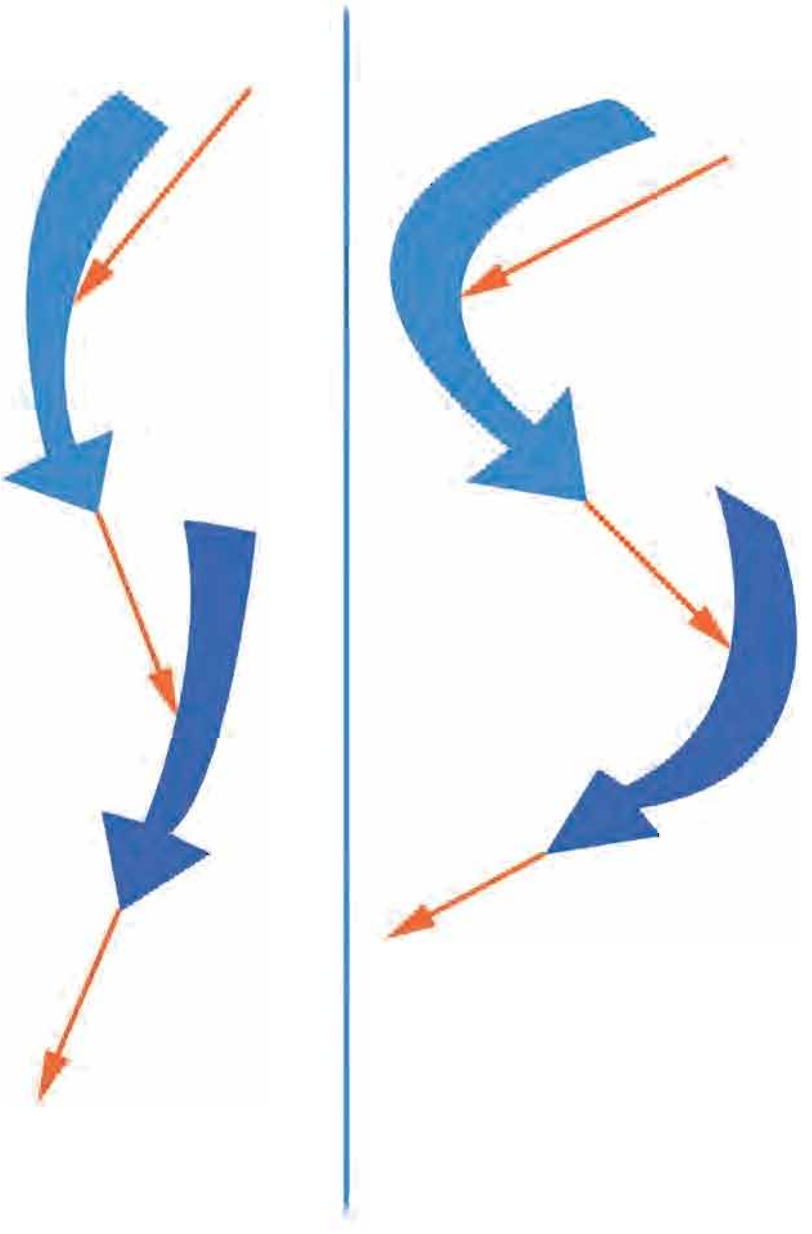
In this first chapter, we are going to experience the risk of pushing our drawings to their forceful extremes. Why? Because pushing poses helps you define character. How far can a drawing go before it falls apart? In what direction do I push the pose? Let's investigate these and other questions in our search for answers.

The golden rule I abide by in designing from life is that the drawing must work or function the way my subject did. So, if it is a figure, it has to follow my rules from the first book. Rhythm must continue through the figure in discussion. Does my understanding of the figure's rhythms come through all of my other opinions?

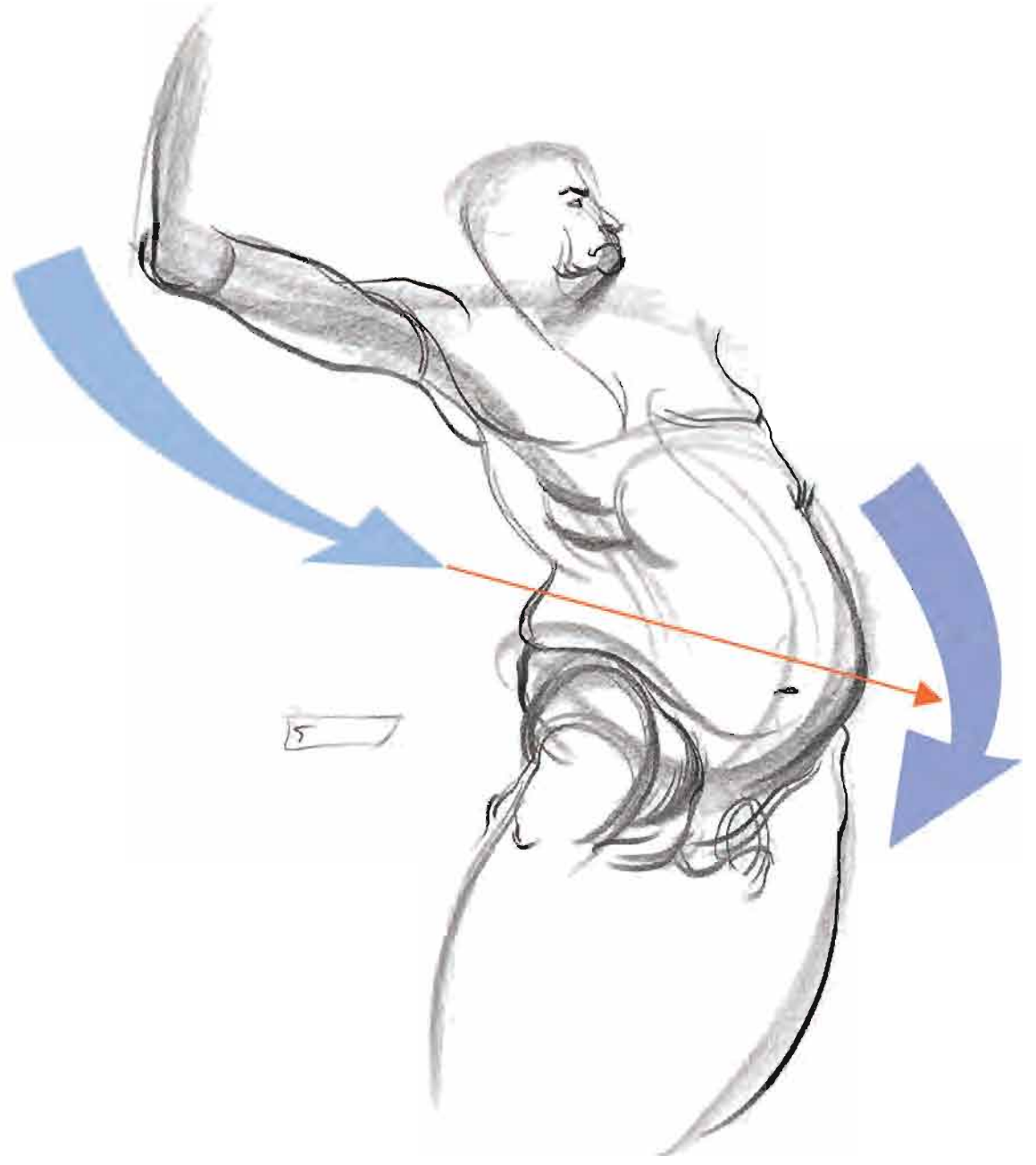
So, as a Force refresher, the arrows in the following diagrams represent the lines you draw with. Each line is a force. In my book *Force: Dynamic Life Drawing for Animators*, I discuss in great detail how force works and the pitfalls that artists fall into that disrupt force in their experience. These diagrams show how the abstraction of force operates and how we can manipulate it.



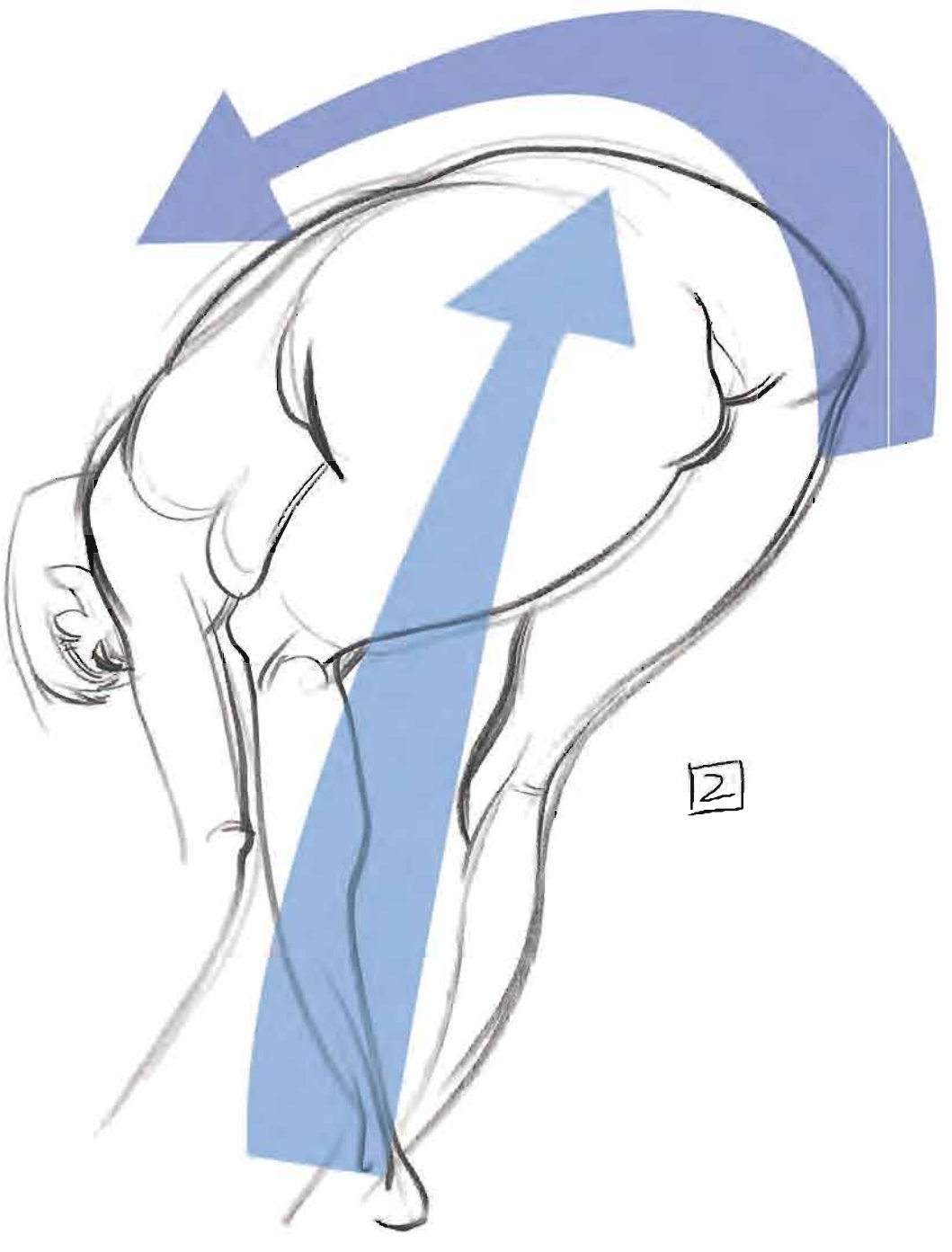
The image on the left shows a weak amount of applied force, the orange arrow, pushing upon the dark blue directional force. If we take the same directional force and apply more force to it as shown in the right diagram, see how much more curved it becomes.



The rhythm on the left side of the page is weaker simply because the angle of applied force, represented here by the orange arrow, is weaker. On the right, we can see an illustration of a more dramatic rhythm because the applied forces are on much stronger, forty-five degree angles. I am going to walk you through this chapter starting with more subtle drawings of opinion to clear and loud exaggerations.

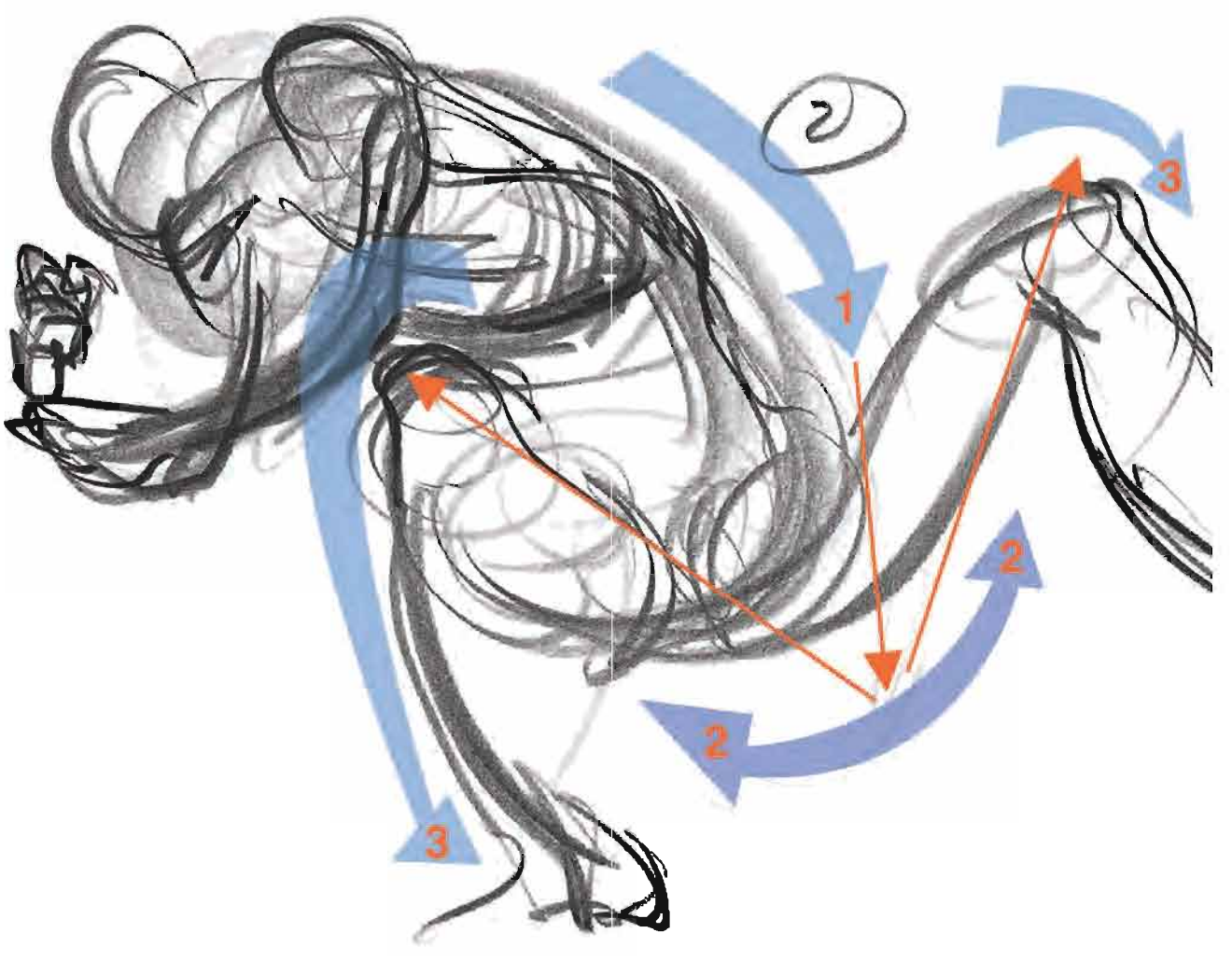


This drawing presents subtle opinion. The arm's leftward stretch is in opposition to that of the lower belly. My experience here is clearly spoken without any real exaggeration. It states my intent without screaming. Notice the line weight in the lower abdomen. I added more pressure to my marks because of my thinking about the forces and gravity found there.



Force is starting to get extreme. The upward thrust in the hip is the obvious main focus. Knowing this is what allows me to push that main idea. Without that thought, I cannot push an opinion. The strength of that curve is what makes it feel so extreme.

The pulling inward with the hands and curving of the back help the body in one clear purpose. The trick here is to be aware of the relationship of these forces. The arms are brackets of force from the back to the shoulders, down to the elbows, and into the hands. The unobvious lies in being sensitive to this experience. I had to allow the drama and energy of this pose to affect me for the drawing to have this impact. If I disconnect myself from it and maybe confronted the experience through the act of measuring, I would have lost this feeling in the drawing. It is his effort that I wanted to empathize with.



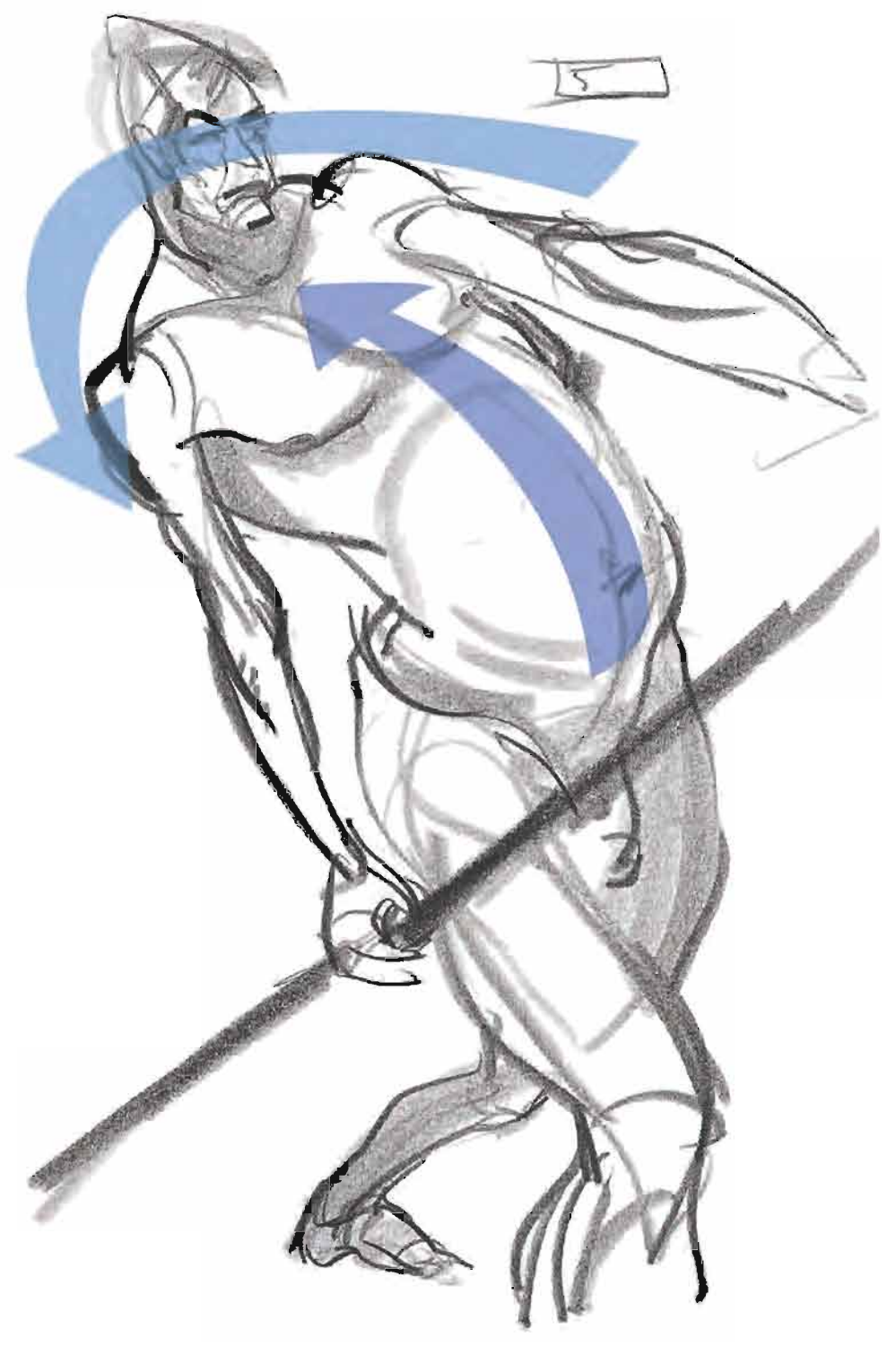
Rhythm is of primary concern to this experience. Force number one moves down to the hips and splits off into the legs. I used the orange arrows here to represent applied force and how it connects forces. The thrust in the upper body, linked into the arms and hands, must work here in conjunction with the hips and legs. I love the gnarled right hand. My immediate impression came across in the drawing. This drawing was achieved with a Lyra 9B lead crayon.

Weight was the main idea here. With this in mind and as my main story point, I pushed that thought into the belly, the hanging of the arms, the drop of the legs, and the pull on the feet. The forward charge of the head also assists in this sensation.

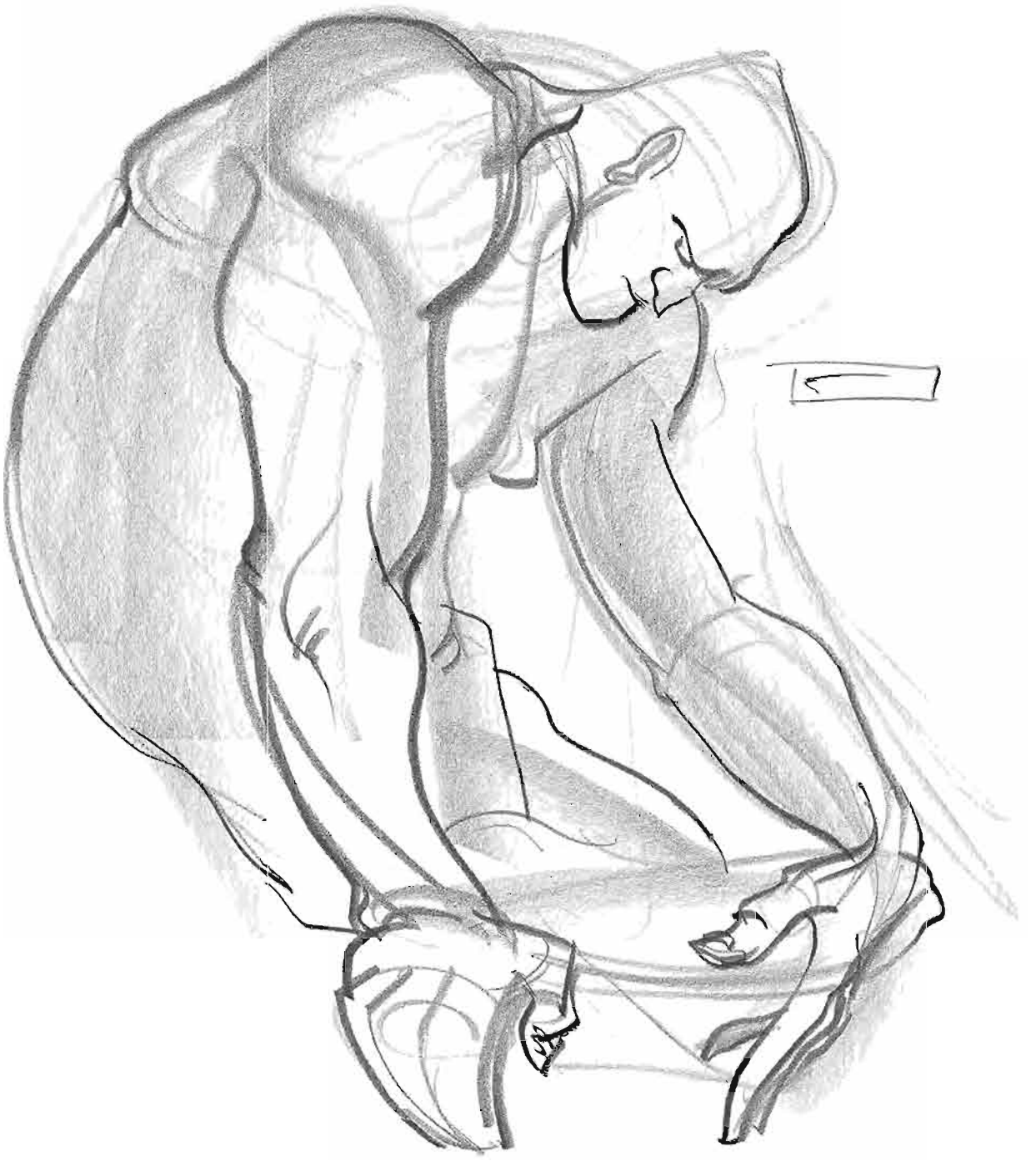
Here the main idea of the story is the lunge in the right shoulder. You can see my effort placed into this moment in the pose. From there, force slides its way down to the feet and down through the right arm.

This one-minute drawing shows how powerful the simplicity of force is. The curves of force in the upper body, legs, and arms relate to one another to keep the figure connected.

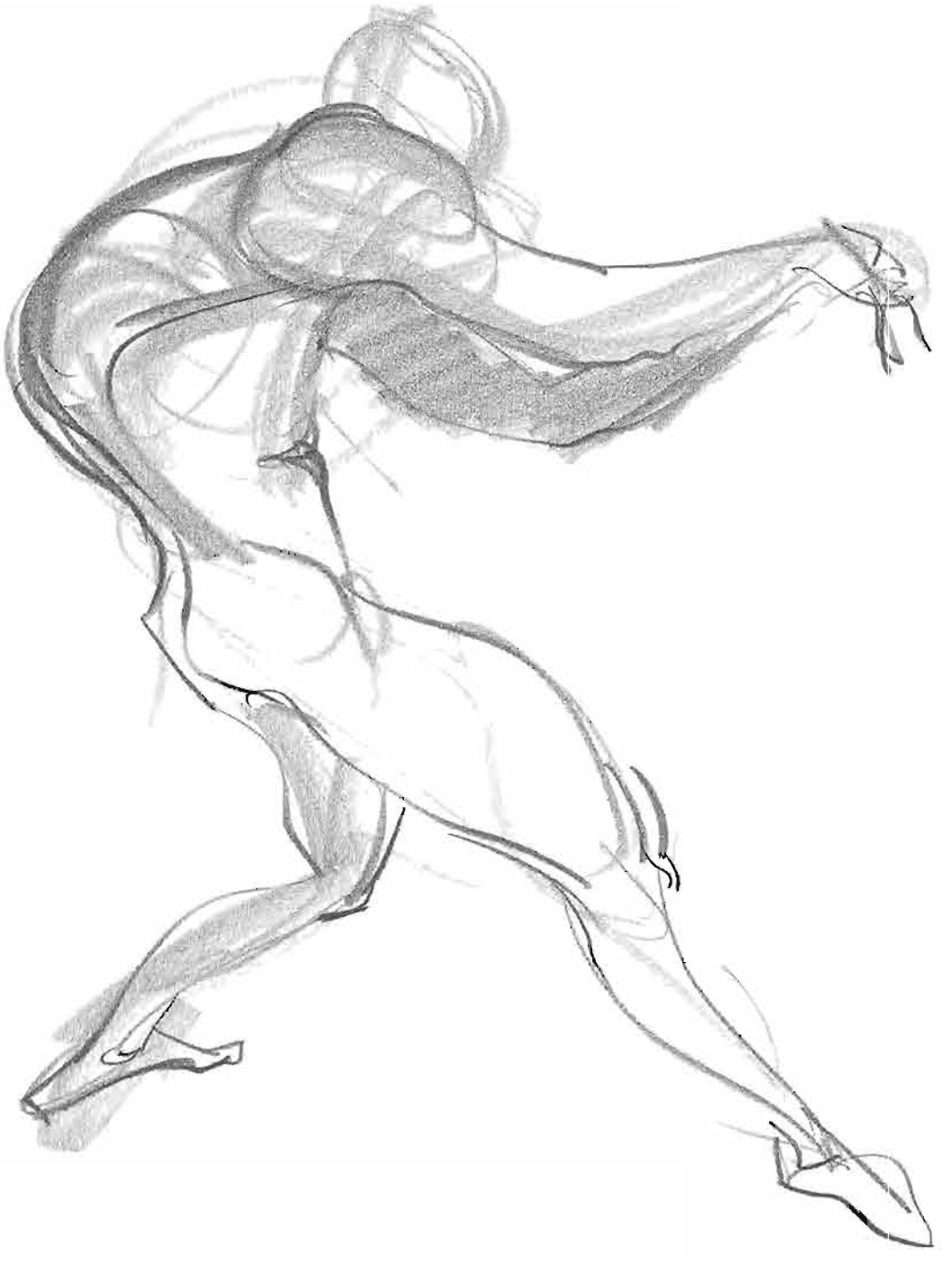
The meandering right shoulder of the model creates an interesting shape to that area of her body. The overlapping in her knees becomes an evident trick of line. The fingers of her left hand feel fluid, thick, and delicate.



The main expression here is the leftward momentum in the back. You can see by the way I reacted to the arms that I was aware of the muscular tension found here.



So the main objective in this drawing was the massive size and thrust of energy in the closer shoulder. Notice the change in idea from one hand to the other. There is an interesting story here between the face and model's left hand. The almost parallel orientation between his left hand and face creates a unity.



Here the opposite directions in force were the priority. The leftward thrust of the back and the suspension bridge of the arms looming rightward pull this figure on a horizontal line. The angle of the back left foot anchors the figure down onto the floor.

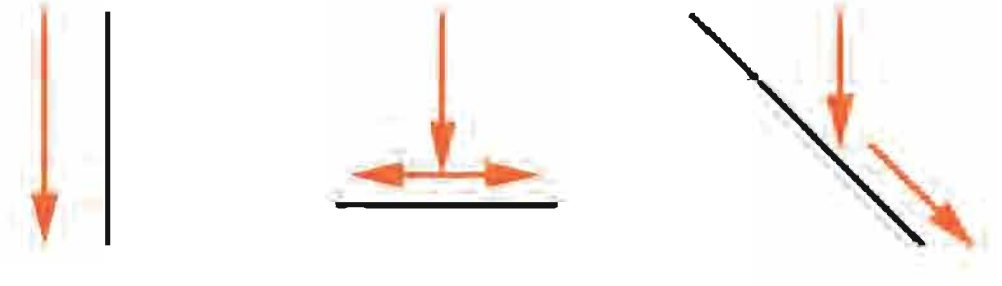
The shoulder pushing its way into the model's face was my first thought here. Next was the curiosity behind the relationship between the two arms. There is a repetition in the hands and wrists that somehow completes the pose.

AMAZING ANGLES

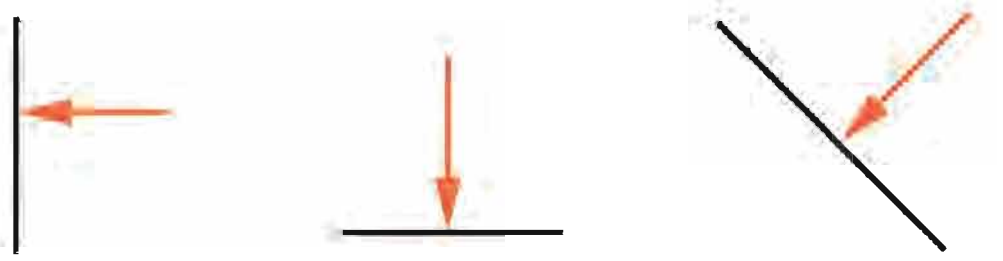
I covered a great deal of the power of the curve in *Force: Dynamic Life Drawing for Animators*. Now let's discuss straight lines relative to force. A perfect vertical or horizontal on the page is far less dramatic than the forty-five degree angle. This is the most dramatic angle on the page. I use angles in an abstract manner. I do not draw for the sake of seeing and measuring angles. Implement angles as another tool for a higher purpose. Don't make angles and measuring the end result of your figure drawing experience!

There are two ways to use angles. The first is what I describe at the beginning of the chapter. Angles are actually created by the relationship between two forces. The angles are applied forces. These applied forces are created by the strength of the curvature of the directional forces.

The second is the abstraction of just an angle on the page. The force here to consider relative to an angle is gravity and how angles relate to each other on the page.



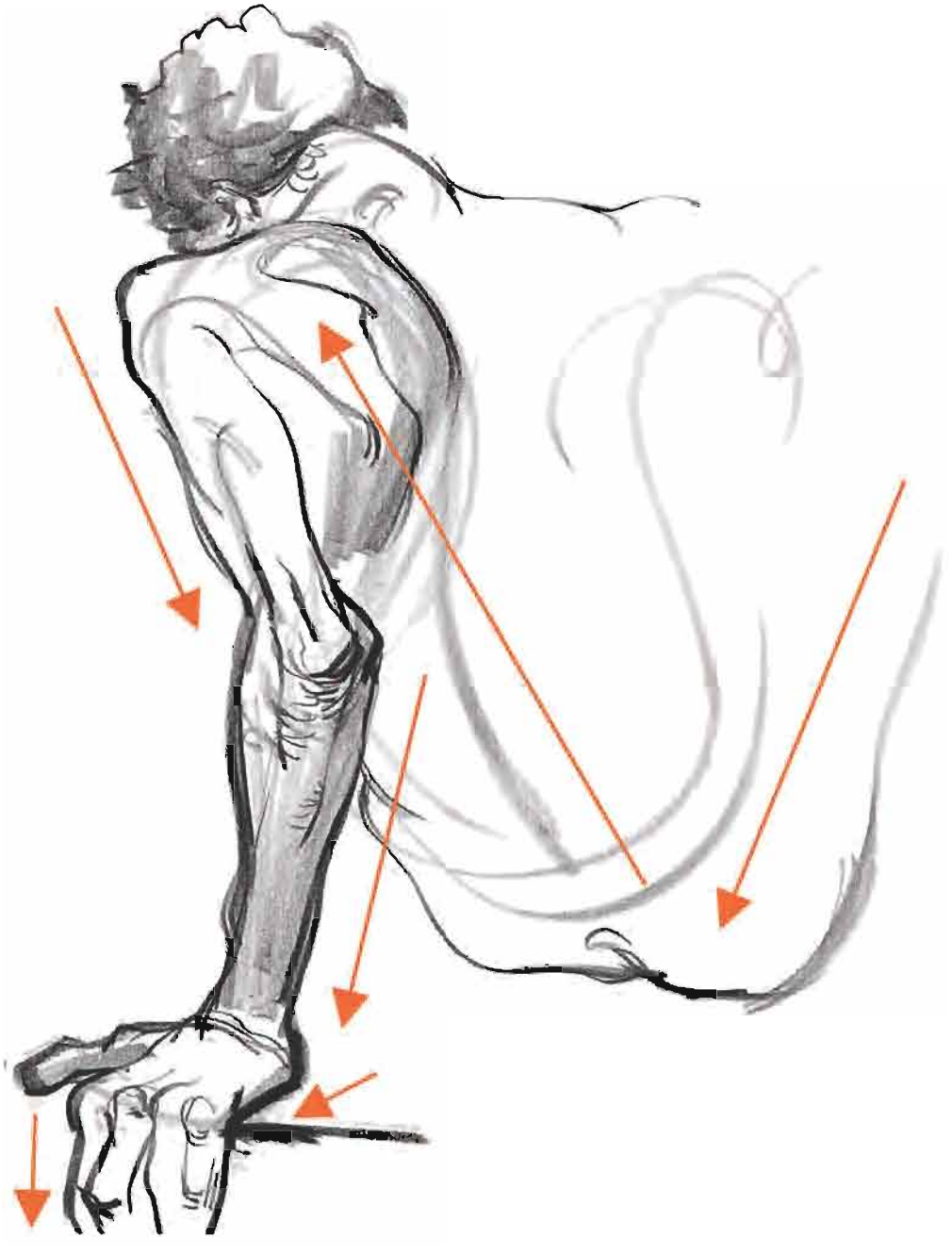
Visually this may not be very exciting but the simplicity behind its application is pure power. There is for me a sense of imagined gravity in the world of the page. I have indicated that with the orange arrows. With that in mind, the vertical thought falls, the horizontal lays flat, and the diagonal at forty-five degrees has the most movement and drama. It fights gravity and redirects it from one location to another. Think of the orange arrow as water.



Let's look now at a perfect, vertical, horizontal, and forty-five degree angled line with force coming in at it on a ninety-degree angle. Force, represented by the orange arrows, smashes into the black lines. This occurs because of the perpendicular relationship. In the first diagram on the left, force smashes into the line and then it falls. The second drawing shows it fall to the floor. In the last, force crashes into the line but then falls on a forty-five degree angle, redirected to a new location.

As our angle tightens, or comes in at forty-five degrees relative to the surface, force does not smash directly into the black line. It starts to slide along the black line as if it wants to continue moving. All instances are dramatic with the drawing to the right having the most drama because force continues on a forty-five degree angle.

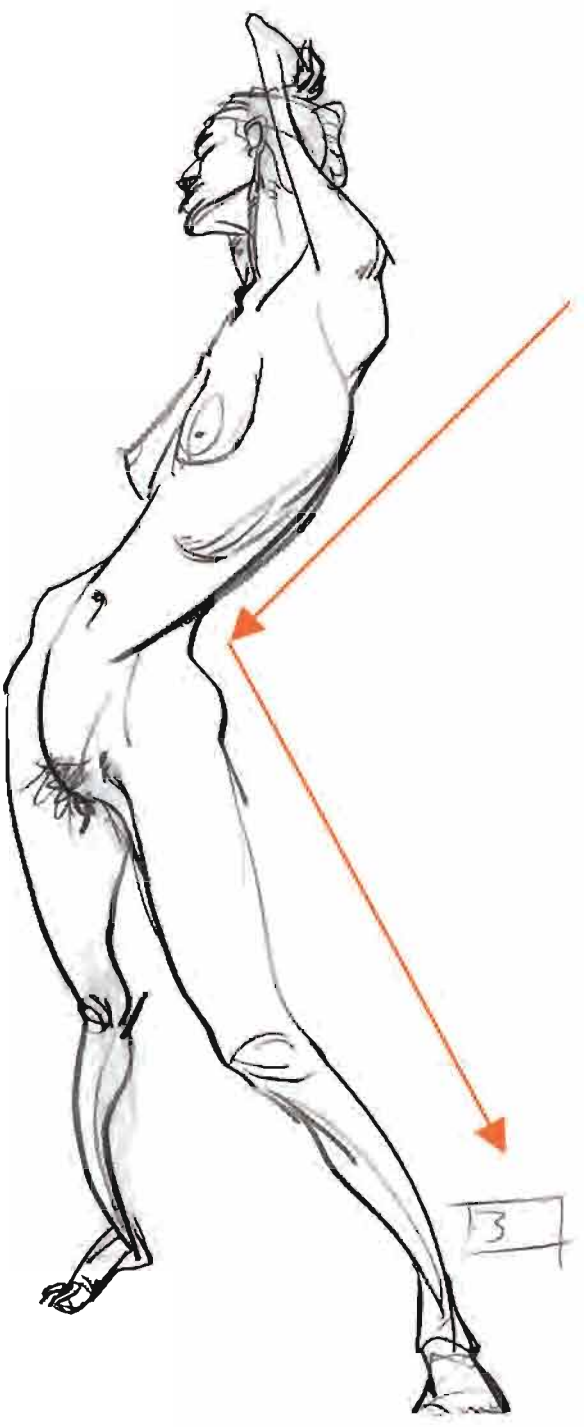
Use the idea of angles to help you see more clearly and abstractly. Angles are a tool to help you become more opinionated.



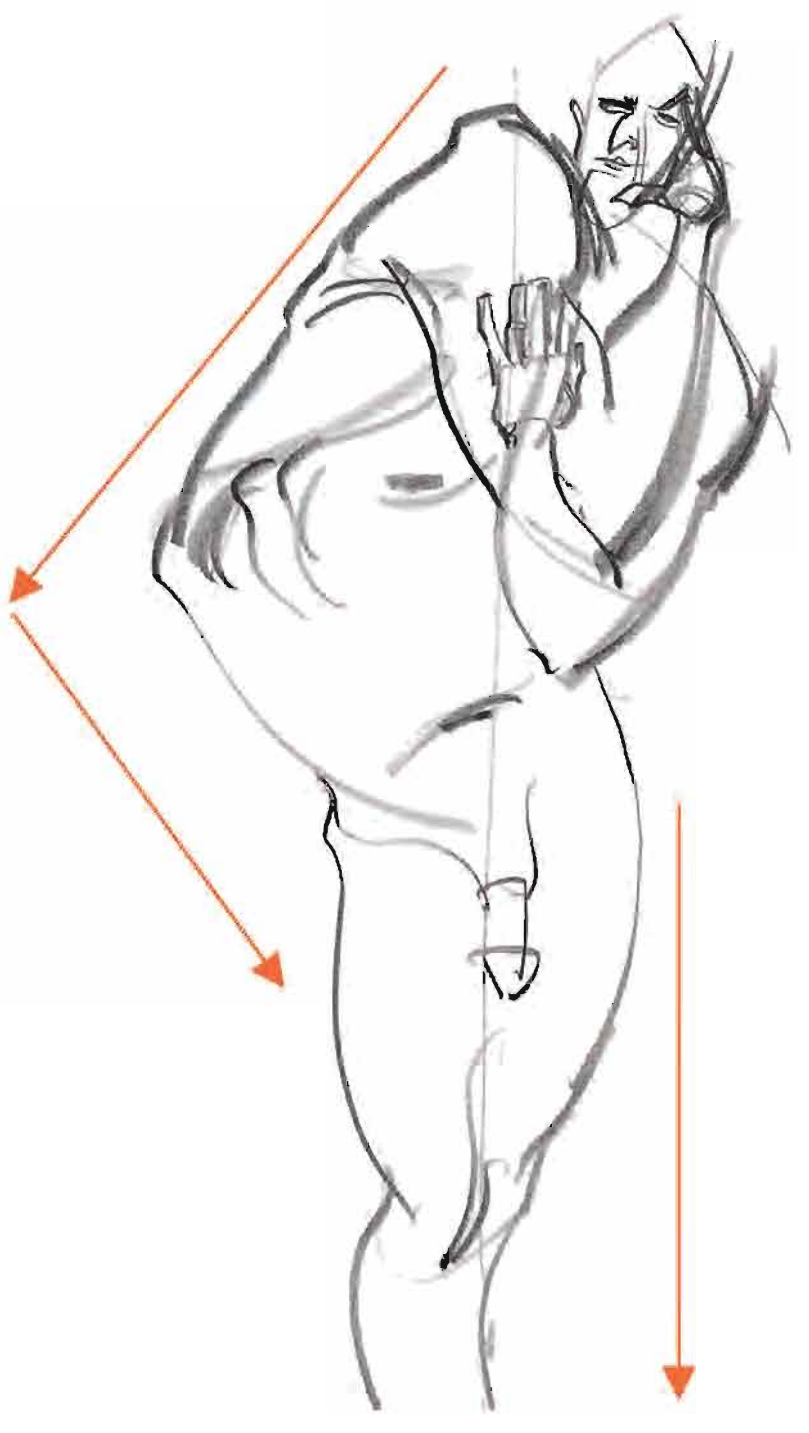
So let's look at some drawings with the power of angles in mind. Here you can see the potency of force driving into the shoulder and how it travels down the arm to the base of the hand. The slightest variation in the angles would vary the intensity of force in each part of the anatomy because of the chain of command in the pose. The angles can be used to see the figure abstractly for placement but more important, I want you to understand how they relate to gravity and then rhythm.

Here is a great example of the power in forty-five degree angles. Starting at the model's head, the angle flips in the upper body and then in the legs. This change from forty-five to forty-five creates an aggressive pose across the page. Again, imagine water running its way down the orange arrows starting at the top of the page.

The length of the model's ribcage in this position is what struck me as amazing. Next, I went after the left shoulder blade poking out of the back and the subtle rhythms found in his upper body to move us down into the hip region. The main angle here is the trunk of the body and against the arm and leg.



This drawing and the next are basically the same setup in angles. Here you can see the main peak in those angles at the model's right hip.



Here the angles meet at the model's ribcage. In the last two drawings we obtained two totally different ideas in the poses but from an abstract technical standpoint, they are the same.

DEVELOPING IDEAS

Where do ideas come from? First and foremost they come from seeing the truth. They often come from a past reference or a combination of many. My point here is that without your own life experience or information, there are no ideas. You are as limited as your knowledge and experiences. Drawing is your skill to visualize into physical form those ideas and enjoy your experience in doing so. To form opinions in drawing, you must have vast wells to work from.

Your ideas may be based on force, form, shape, analogies, from art, film, theatre, literature, or ANYTHING else that interests you! Perhaps you see something that reminds you of a distant culture, a plant, war, or act of nature. As you draw the figure, open your mind to your thoughts and reactions to the visual stimuli you experience.

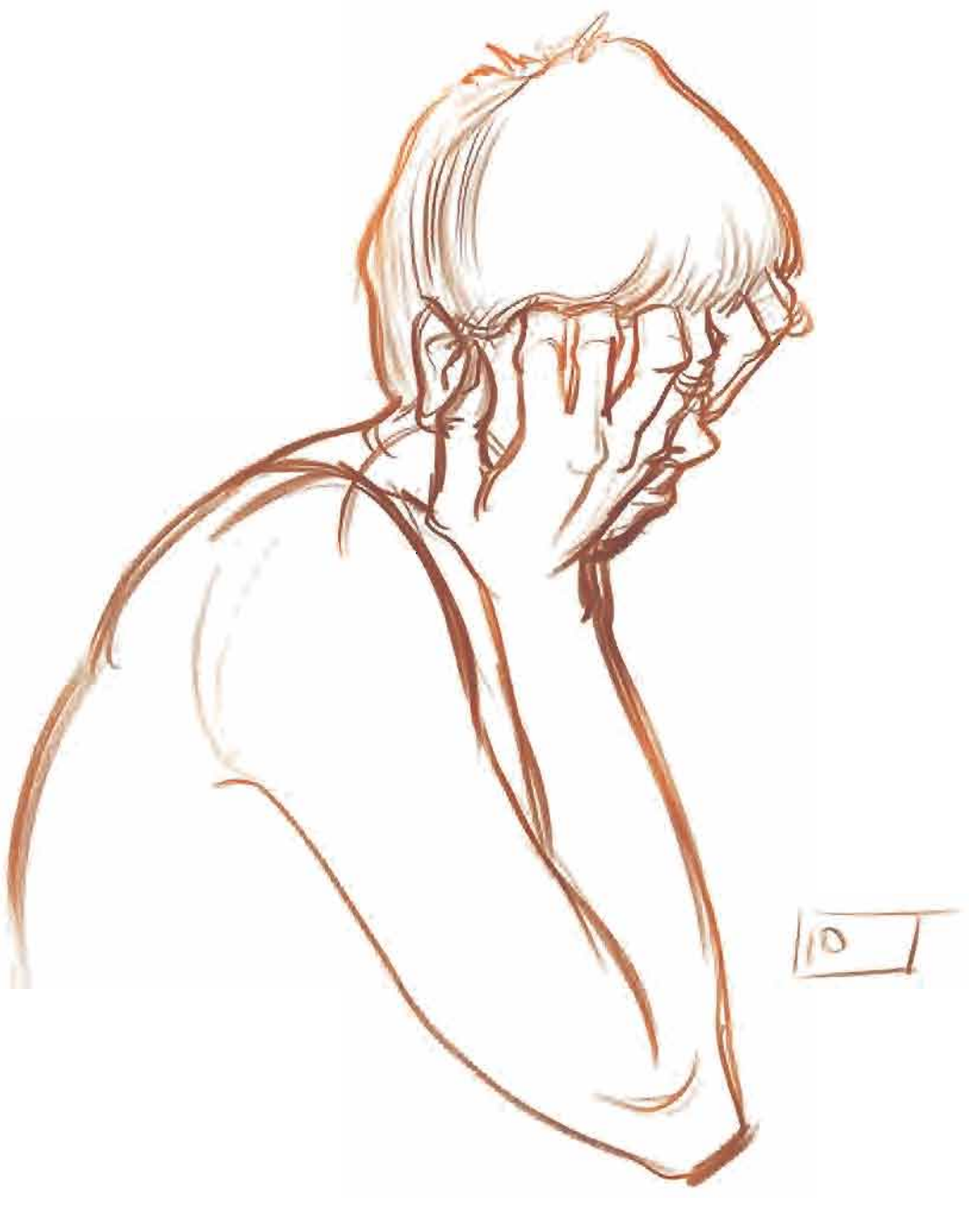
Bring visual inspiration with you to drawing class. The most common is an artist's work that inspires you. It may also be more indirect like a photo of a Buddhist temple, a medieval sword, or a candy wrapper ... whatever interests you. Sometimes these ideas will be absorbed into your work and other times they may not.

The idea of force alone makes me often think of water, wind, fire, and earth. In my book *Force: Dynamic Life Drawing for Animators* we used the concept of blind flight and a journey to distant lands to bring creative concepts to drawing.

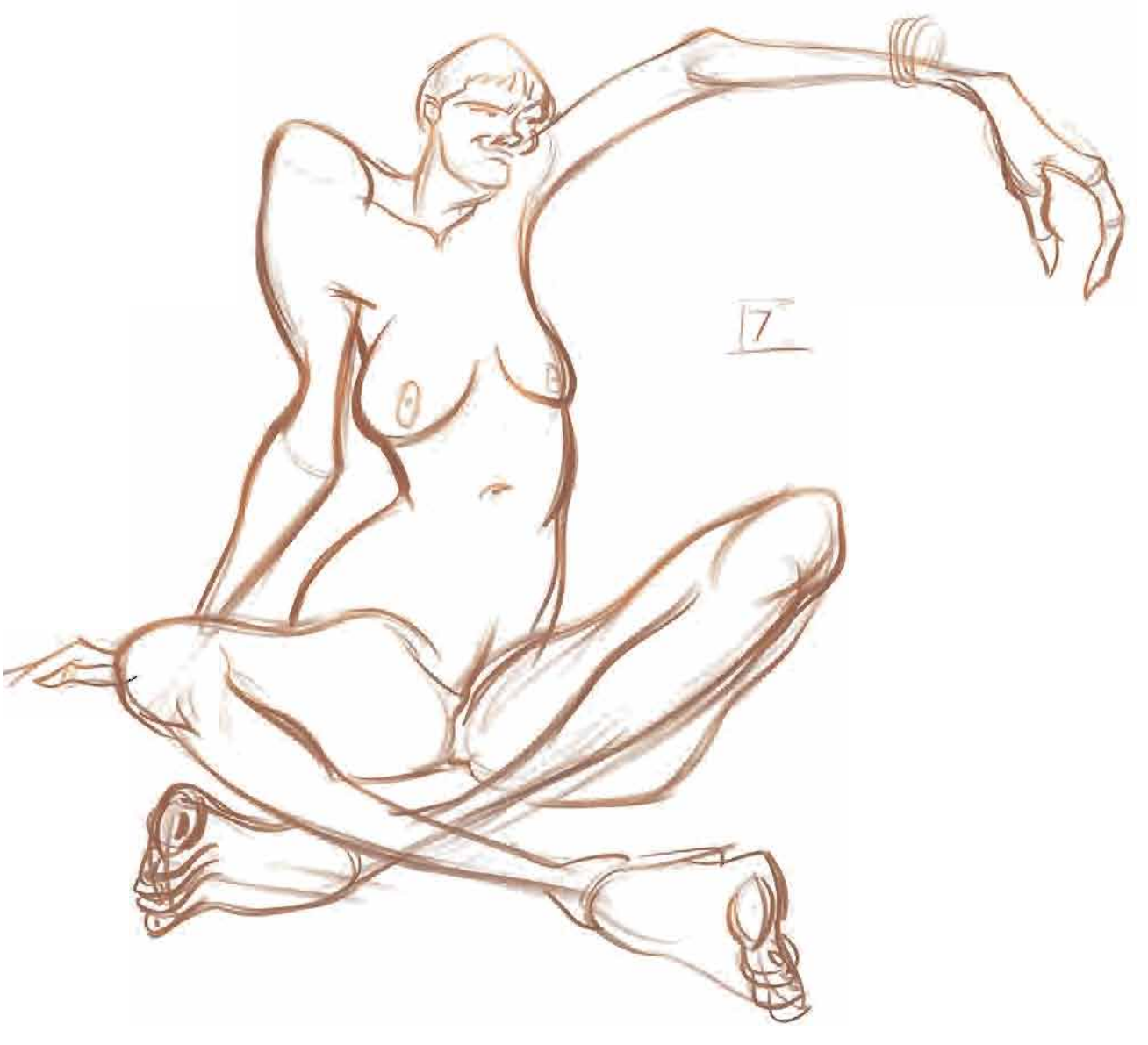
Drawing does not have to be about accuracy to the image in front of you in the manner of mathematical angles and tones. It does not have to be from a plaster cast. It does not have to take nine hours to feel safe and fulfilled with a drawing. If you enjoy that process approach drawing in that way, but more often than not, I see many students frustrated with this approach to art

What I enjoy is coming up with ideas and the challenge of drawing them. I go after what my main point of interest is. Let's look at some examples.

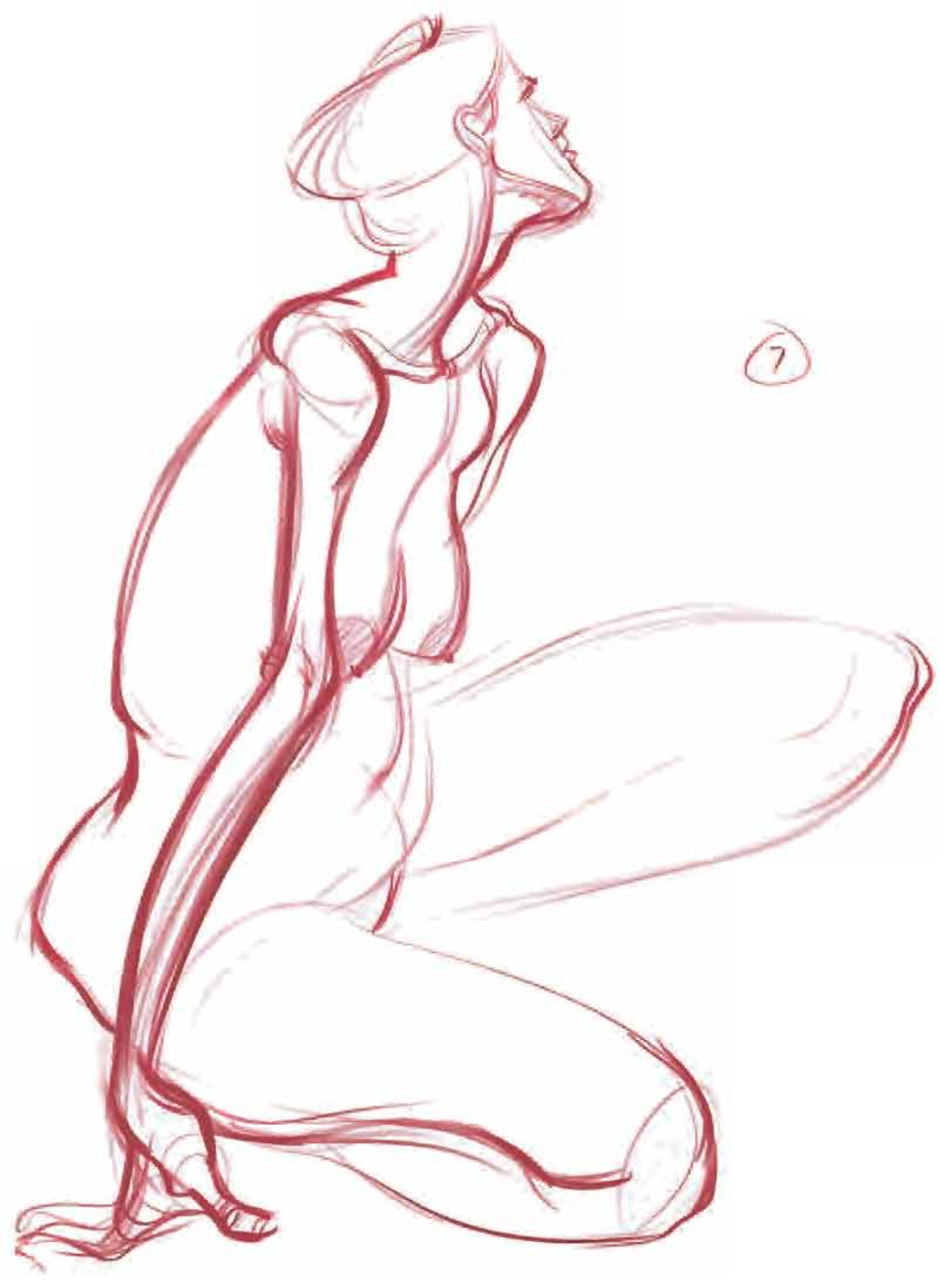
So let's start with a drawing that has subtle opinions or ideas. This will give me the opportunity to show you that a drawing this traditional is still full of opinion. This is not an act for the lazy. See how the model's bottom left ribcage is where the drawing has the most force. The face and hand were handled with an abstract flat shape that I filled with structure because of their complexity. Her left thigh has the fleshy texture I was after against her harder knee. I pushed her right arm back with tone to accentuate the shape of her breast. By doing this, it contrasts her other breast and shows us the function of her ribcage to the pose and its story. While all of this occurs, her pose stays rhythmic.



This is an example of my opinion guiding me closer to the truth of the moment. Instead of copying the model, I went after an idea. The idea was the anguish shown through the model's humanity. This idea led me to look for clues. I paid more attention to the stress of the hands, upward push of the nose, and frown found in the mouth.



Watch how force drives the opinion. The upward force found in the model's right shoulder determines the massive size of the shoulder. Then the other arm's design is determined by its function of a curved stretch. Her arm is like a rubber band pulled from the hand around a large object. The verbs are what I accentuate to form an opinion.



Here, numerous ideas transpired. The first, obvious one was the long and narrow fluidity of the right arm and how it slid into the hand. Then, the play of that rhythm against the opposing pull in the neck gave me an idea of an attitude in the pose.

The ideas are getting more extreme. The upward thrust in the hip helped dictate its size and importance to the drawing. The right leg sat in this pose like a Greek column. You can see how I swept the right shoulder outward at an aggressive angle because of how much applied force was evident there.

You can see on this drawing my notes from when I just started teaching students how to extract character from the models. In my Force classes I discuss the analogy of being a journalist with your drawing. That means draw what is happening and know what is most important to the story. This journalism starts with hard facts but here I want you to write more juicy stories with smart opinion. It is a dangerous edge to write on. I also wrote in the corner to think about adjectives. In the drawing, look at all of the different opinions I had. There is the T-square-like corner in the jaw, the wrinkled skin on her neck, the boney shoulder and weapon-like scapula, and the angle of the arm and neck versus the right angle of the body and legs. There is much to look at and discuss while drawing. There is much to have fun with and sink your teeth into!!

Here are three drawings of the same model. The story of each pose, though, is extremely different. My impressions and ideas are based on the specific moments I have with the model per pose or story. This one talks about the size and distance of her head relative to her legs. I also was attracted to her scapula poking out past her arm. Every line in these drawings was put down with great deliberateness. What you see is what you get. There was no blue-sky phase (a phase when artists use a blue pencil to think on the page and have liberty with how sloppy they are in this process. Then they clean up their concept with lead or ink).

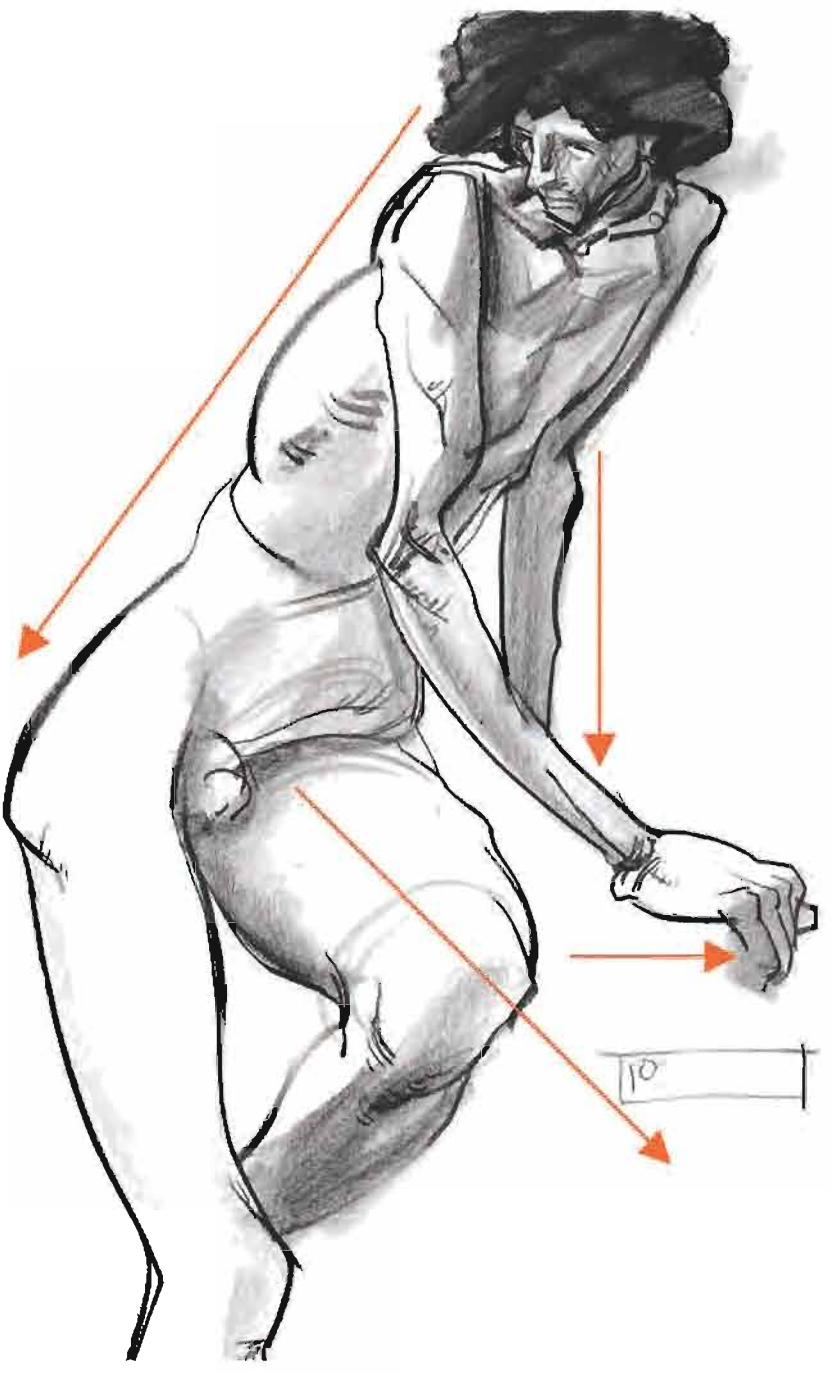
In this story I went for the long thinness of her hands and flat broadness of her butt. Look again at the straight to curve design in her ribcage to back. I love the tiny right foot all the way back in the page. This pose with its design could easily become a motorcycle or spaceship.

Look at the wrinkles in the neck, the hard curve at the bottom right corner of the ribcage, and the thinness of the waist. These moments were exiting experiences that I moved through in drawing this story. His posture and neck reminded me of a bird as I drew him. The small, tightness of the right hand and the open left hand was a thoughtful moment.

Interesting ideas occurred here. The main contrast was in the fluidity and thickness of the back relative to the firm vertical impression of the hips and legs. This story is like a snake on top of a tree stump. Then to top all of this off, we have the story between the left hand out in space and its relationship to the model's face.

The silhouette in this drawing is where the idea was for me. The clear read and personality of the model's right hand out in space and how it related to the model's body was intriguing. It sat out there like a spatula.

So here you can see how force has inspired design! The upward thrust of the back helped push the design of the pose. I also went after the right arm's concept of "hanging." Notice how each foot was handled differently based on its function to the pose. This feels like a lazy bull.



So this drawing is basically two forty-five degree angles. The first starts at the top right corner of the page and the second takes us from the hips to the bottom right corner of the page. Look at the vertical strength of the left arm in relationship with the horizontal platform of the right hand. Combined, they create a ninety degree angle that gives us structure for the dynamic forty-five degree angle.

Exercises

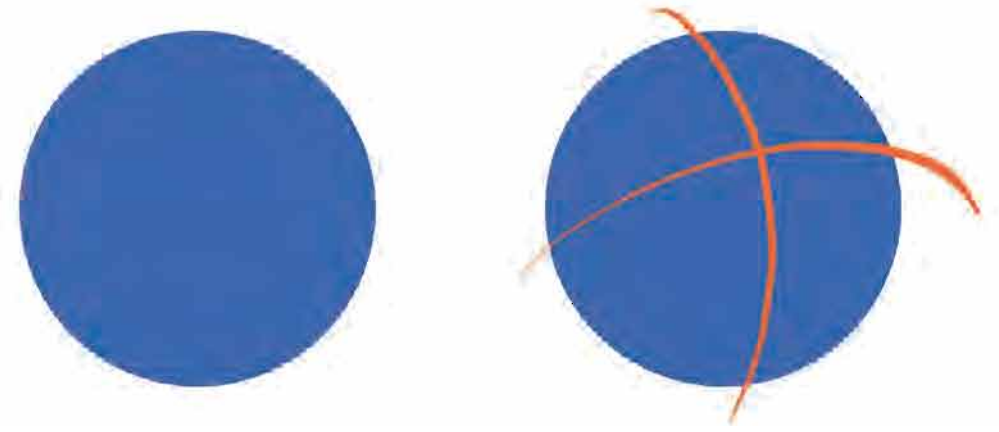
1. Use short amounts of time in the beginning of your drawing session to push you into trusting yourself. Don't second-guess your choices!
2. Warm up your arm. Draw big arcs. Draw big straight lines. Then draw with your elbow, wrist, hand, and fingers. Your arm is hierarchical just like our theory in force and design.
3. Go after one clear point of force. Where is it most obvious to you? Go after it with everything you've got. Make it clear and strong.
4. See clearly the angles or applied forces created by the relationships of directional forces in the figure. Use them to create as much or as little drama as intended.
5. Stay aware of gravity.
6. Use outside sources to inspire you in class. They may be photos, other artists' drawings, your own drawings, or audio.
7. In my classes, sometimes I will play movie soundtracks to motivate the class into feeling and thinking in a certain way.

Chapter 2

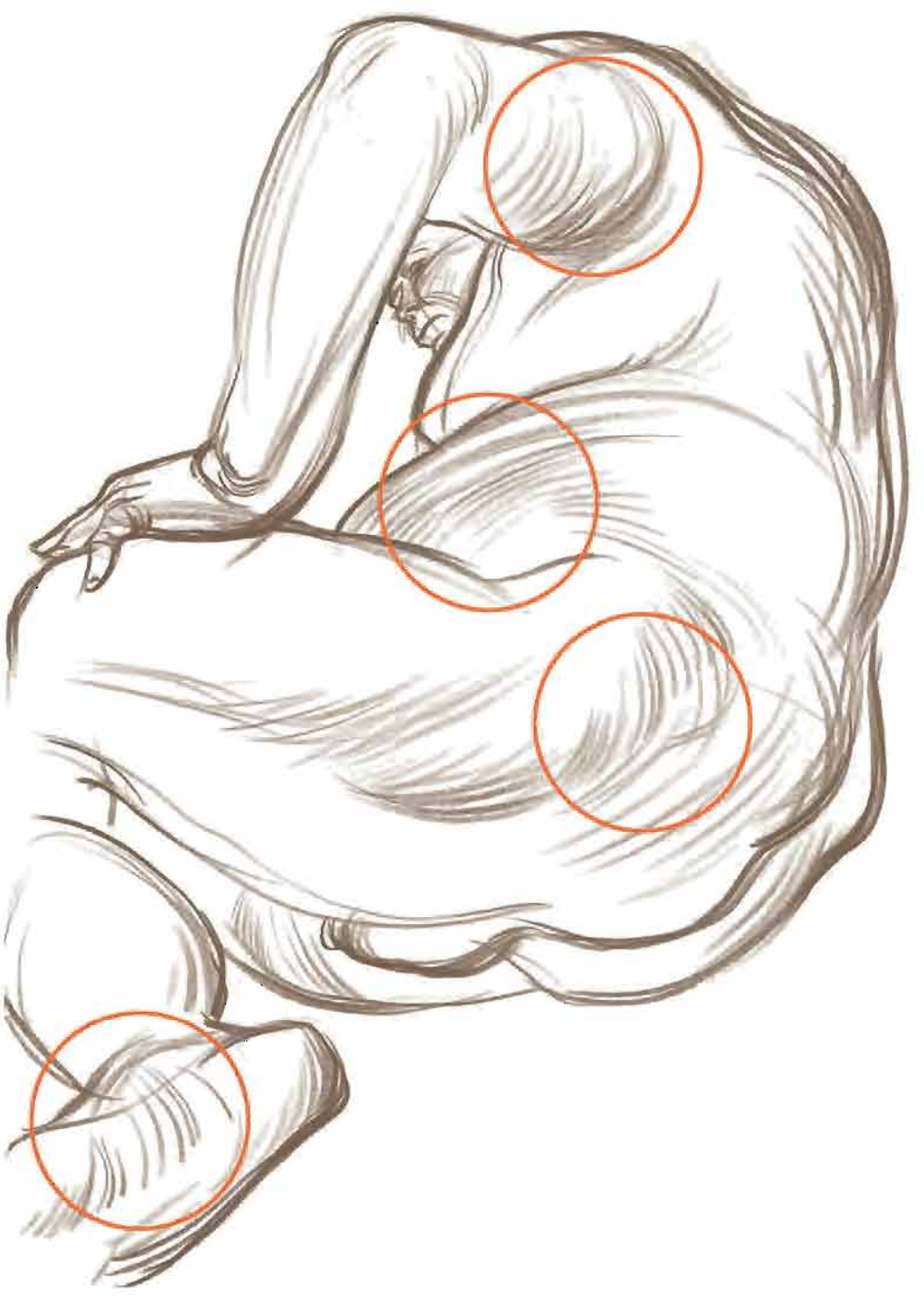
Space with Character

FORCEFUL FORM

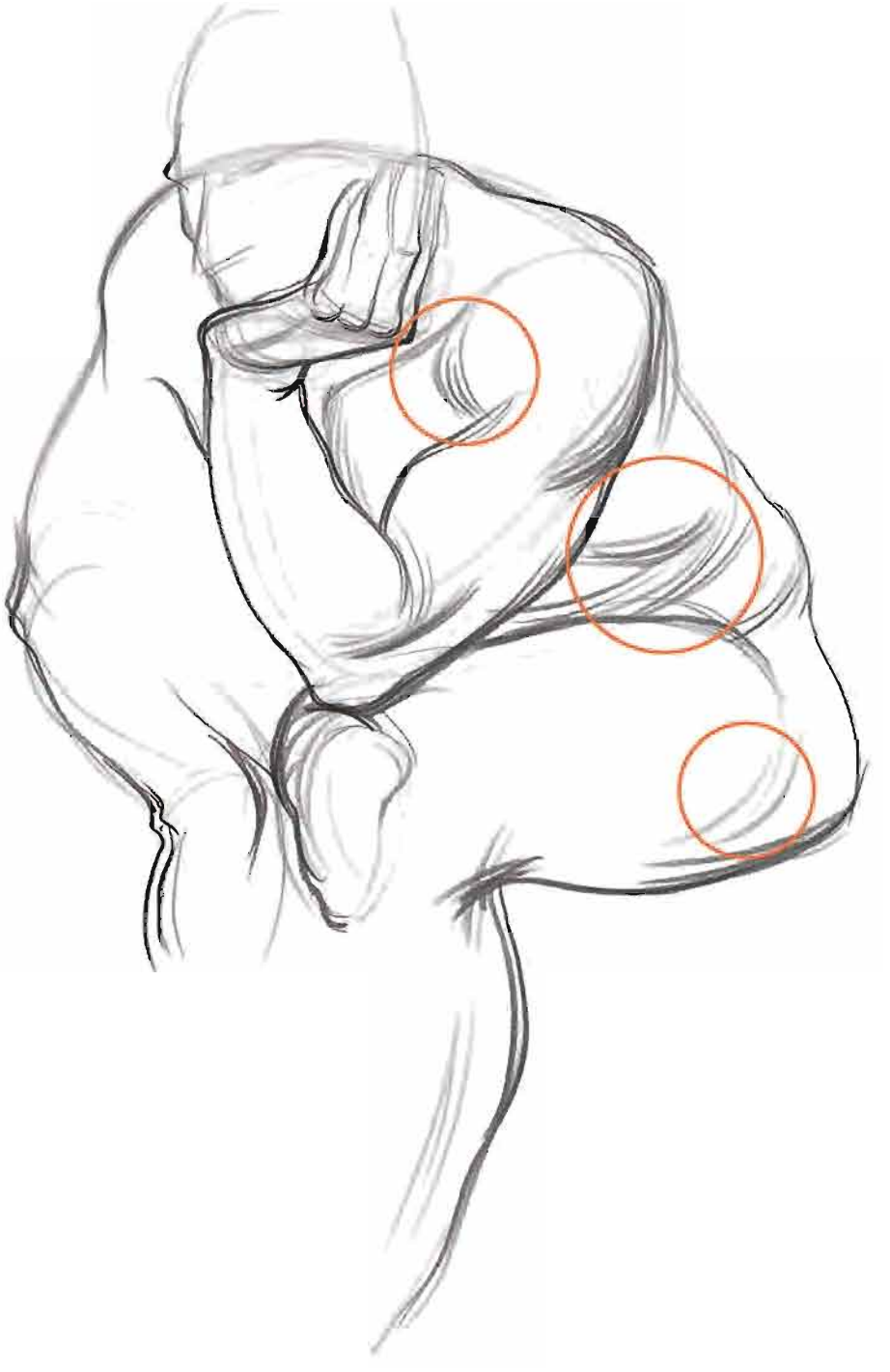
I believe that the well-rounded draftsperson has the capacity to understand how to draw depth and understand the flat plane of the page at the same time. No matter how well you can depict perspective, form, light, etc., there is real power in understanding that you are still working on a two-dimensional surface.



The shape on the left shows us a flat circle; the shape on the right shows us the form of a sphere. This incredible change occurs because of the two orange, curved lines. They make our minds think that the flat blue circle is round. Of course the circle is not and never will be, but look at how deceiving some simple curved lines can be on this circle shape. Let's look at some figure drawings that show how the curved line implies form.



So this drawing is full of forceful surface lines. These lines explain the specific roundness of the anatomy, what direction in space it is moving in, and what direction force is pushing it in. That is a bang for your buck. Each of the lines give you three pieces of information!



Here is a drawing that shows how curved lines show the forms of the figure moving in space. Remember that this is all an illusion, just lines on a page.

As complicated as this may seem, all of the surface lines assist in describing how this model is moving through a tubular space. See how the lines continuously wrap around the forms to clarify the understanding of roundness.

In this drawing we have lines of forceful form showing the roundness of the figure and we have a good deal of depth. See how each leg has a clear direction in space. This is achieved by the curves at the top of the model's left leg and the curves at his right knee. The other trick I am using here is size. See the size difference between the two knees.

This is the last drawing for showing form. See how the concept of form assists in the forces found in the shoulders, arms, lower back, and hips. The form of the left shoulder bulging out in space helps punctuate how much force is found there. That forceful area exists because of the model leaning to the left and leveraging against the pole that the hand is holding onto.

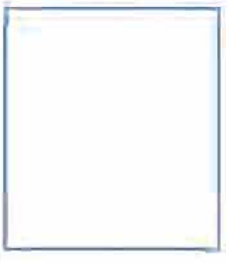
Obtaining the ability to create form and depth on the page is the artist's trick, our illusion. As soon as you draw two straight lines converging, our mind interprets it as perspective. Curved lines are the beginning of describing round forms. The great artists of the Renaissance used these tricks to describe landscapes, architecture, and the amazing human figure!

Students usually start their process of depth with line by learning the rules of perspective. These rules help the artist become aware of the four dimensions of space we live in. Students then learn anatomy and the linear description of form. After many years of mastery in this, you realize that there are shortcuts to defining these rules on a flat sheet of paper. You finally reveal what lies beyond the Green Curtain! In my book, *Force: Dynamic Life Drawing for Animators,* I cover the basic tricks, listed below:

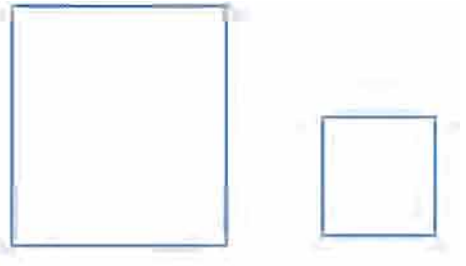
1. Size
2. Overlap
3. Convergence (perspective)
4. The denial of tangents

What I want to show you in this chapter is an extremely powerful tool for controlling these rules to create images with even more depth and opinion. When students in my classes were exposed to this tool, their art EXPLODED with depth. Are you ready? OK, here it is!

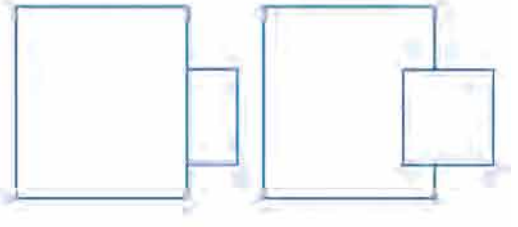
THE SPATIAL BOUNDING BOX—SIZE EQUALS DEPTH



A line drawing of a box. A spatial bounding box. Big deal, you say. Ah, yes it is a big deal. It has taken me many years and even more drawings to come up with this simple tool to teach depth. See, when our minds have something as simple as a box to fill with information, we are not intimidated to do so. This framework allows us to push our boundaries. How does it do this? Next illustration.



The box on the right is smaller than the one on the left. What does that mean? It means it is farther away, right? Well, it could be or it could mean it is just smaller and the same distance from us as the other box. In this chapter, we are going to use it as our tool to push the depth of our page!



If we want to further clarify the depth on the page we could overlap the boxes. In the image on the left, there is implied perspective since the box that is farther away from us is smaller. The image on the right is slightly confusing with the closer box being smaller. The overlap here is what saves us from misunderstanding the spatial relationship in the drawing. This shows you how powerful the two drawing ideas, size and overlap, are.

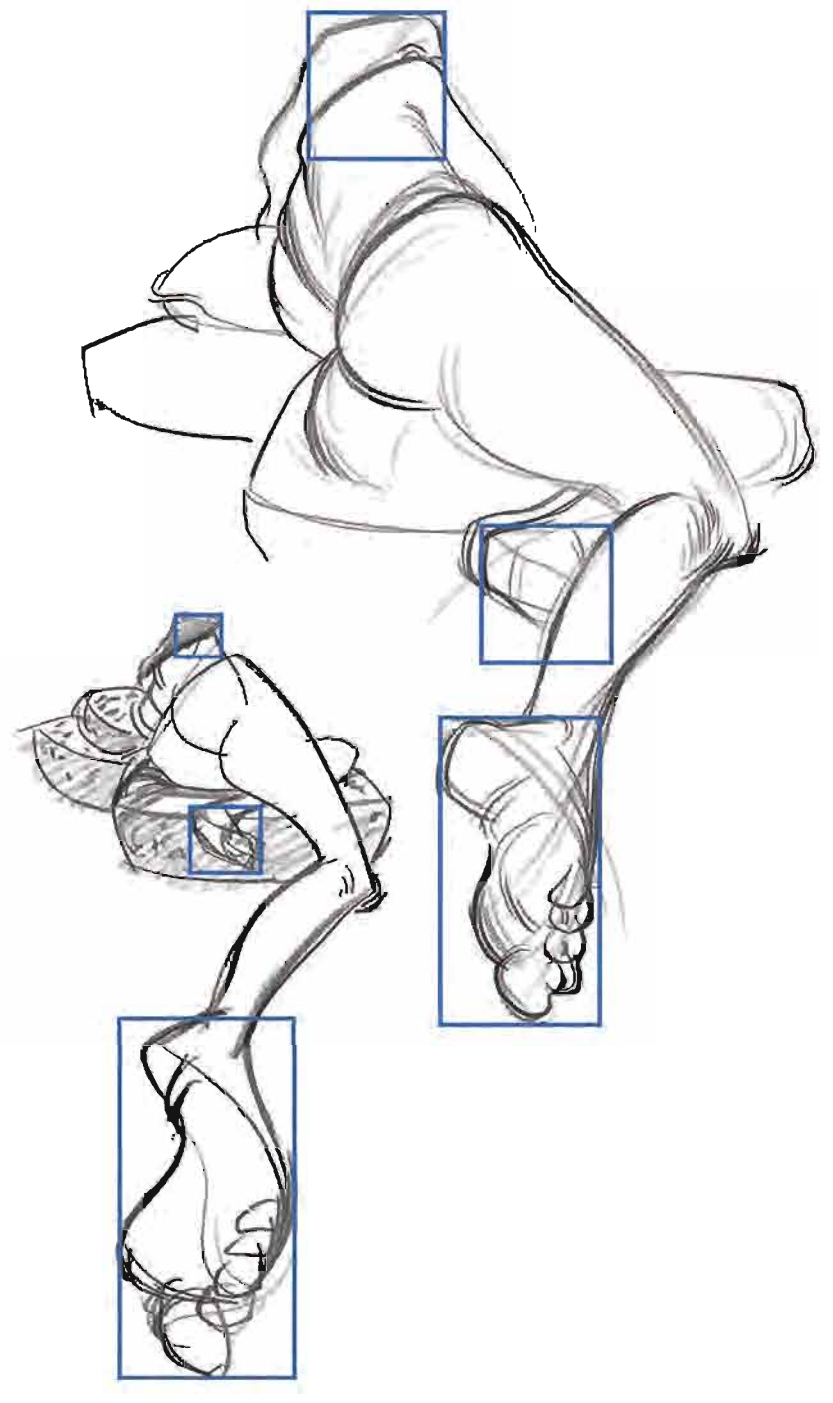
Here, form helps in the exaggeration of fluidity. Look at how force comes from the buttocks over the thigh and down its far side to the knee and then continues into a rhythm to the ankle.

I control depth through size and a simple way of controlling size is through seeing abstract flat parameters. Look at the bounding boxes around the different areas of the figure. In the beginning, do this with realistic purpose. For instance, a foot that is closer to you would be larger than a foot farther away. You can do this on a photograph. This concept is visually real. This happens because of the roundness of our eyes.

Another way I describe this idea to my students is that areas of the page take up a certain amount of acreage, as if the paper is land.

You can see the exaggeration in space here between the foot and the model's head. The overlapping moments on the left side of the body, starting at the ribcage and moving down to the left foot, clearly define the figure's direction in space.

Here are more examples of the bounding box idea. Look at the acreage that the distant hand occupies versus the closer hand. The amount of flat space the hand takes fools our brains into thinking that an object is close or far to us. To really apply this idea, there should be two of the same object, such as the hands. The human body is built in pairs so there is a great opportunity for this.



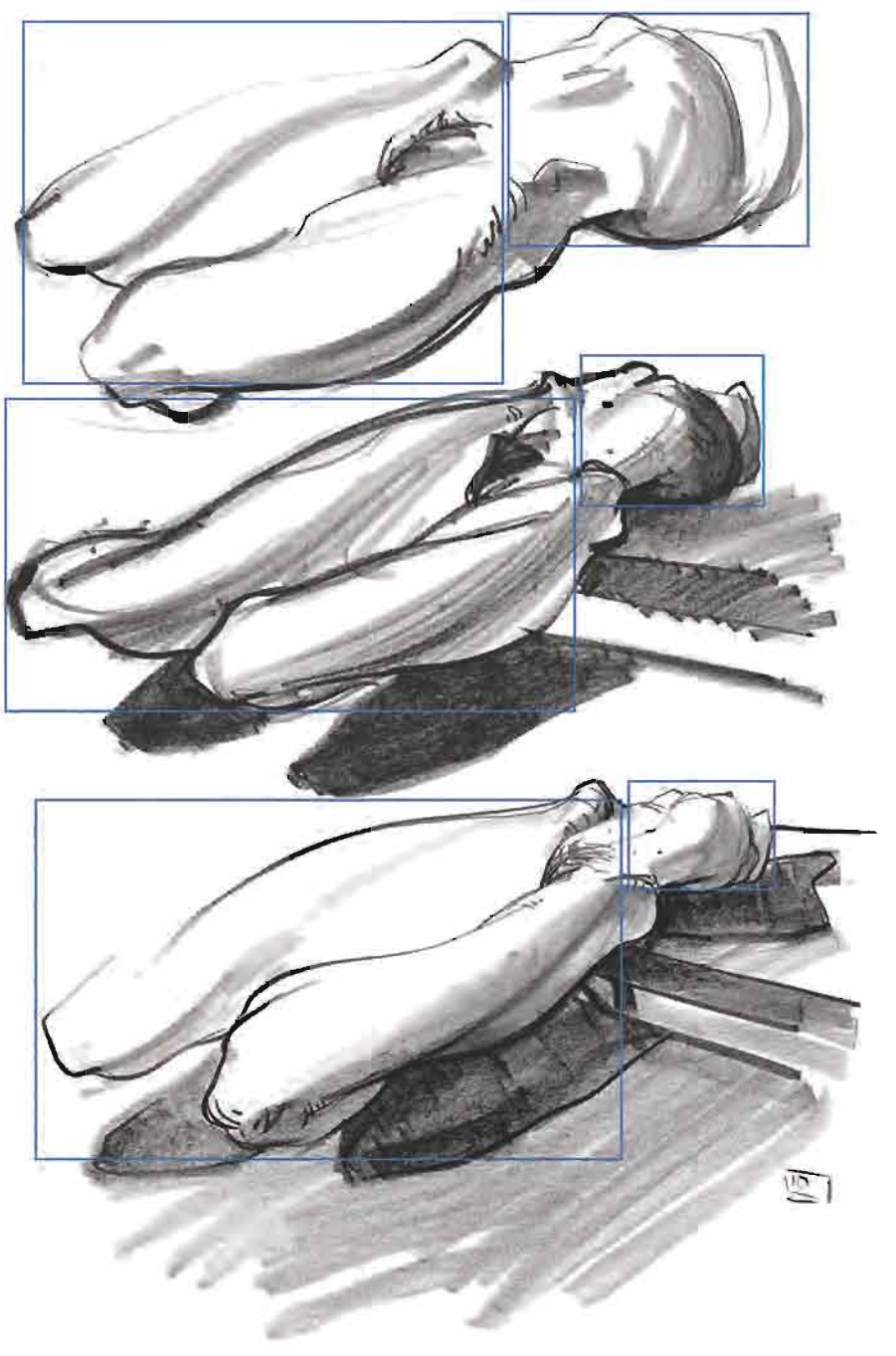
The top drawing was my first pass at this story. I then attempted stretching the space between the head and the closer foot. Look at the size difference in the spatial boxes! The most drastic change is between the feet. The far foot in the bottom drawing is tiny in comparison to the closer foot. All of this space is designed through change in size of the box!

The size of the model's head and ribcage relative to the size of her legs creates the illusion of depth on the page. This creates a feeling of power since we feel like we are looking up at her, as if she was a giant.

Look closely at the bounding box I drew for the model's head. I brought her foot and knee out in this image. The leg with the large knee comes forward aggressively and recedes back in space to the small foot. This radical size difference opened the door for me to consider the amount of pressure being pushed upon the smaller foot.

This is the furthest I render a drawing. I show it to you because of all of the tricks I used in the presentation of my idea. First, let's talk about the spatial bounding box. Notice the size variety in the spots on the pillow in the foreground. Look at the direction of the strokes I used for the forceful form in the left shoulder. They point right up to the artist's face. I also slightly thickened the outline of the model's edge to separate her from the background. Know your objective and use the right tools for the right job to get your point across.

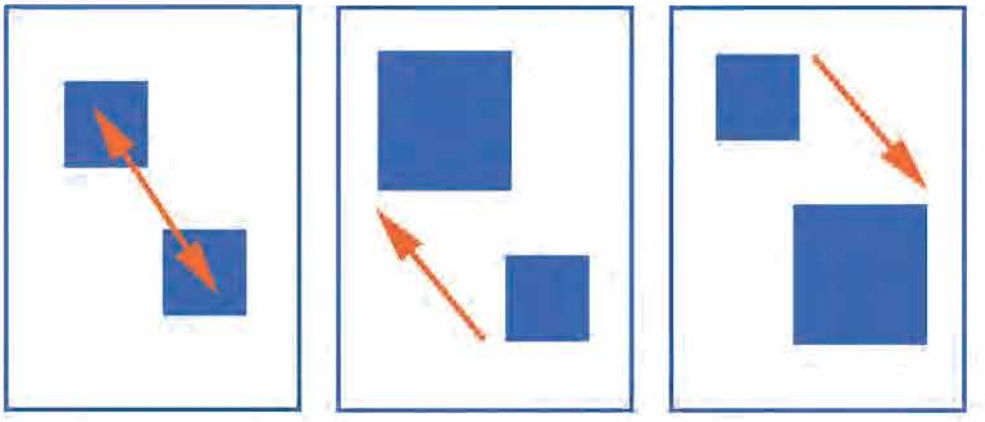
This drawing has a more subtle implication of size equating depth. You can feel how the hand comes toward us because it is slightly larger than it should be compared to the size of the model's head. All of the overlapping moments in the journey from the head to the hand also describe depth to us.



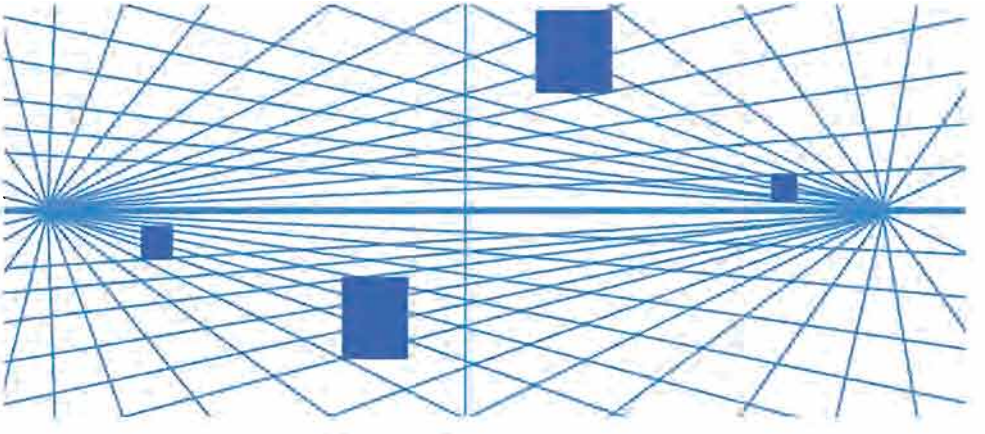
In this series of three drawings, I kept pushing the idea of the weight in the legs and the stress that it applied to the upper body. How did I do this? I kept shrinking the size of the ribcage and increasing the size of the legs. This pushed the ribcage back into the page and brought the legs forward. Also, our minds think that the bigger something is, the heavier it is.

Here is our last image in this section. The obvious size variation here is in the head to the hand relationship. There is the more subtle difference between the two eyes. I love that the lines are our paths along the flat surface of the page but our mind makes us think we travel away in space.

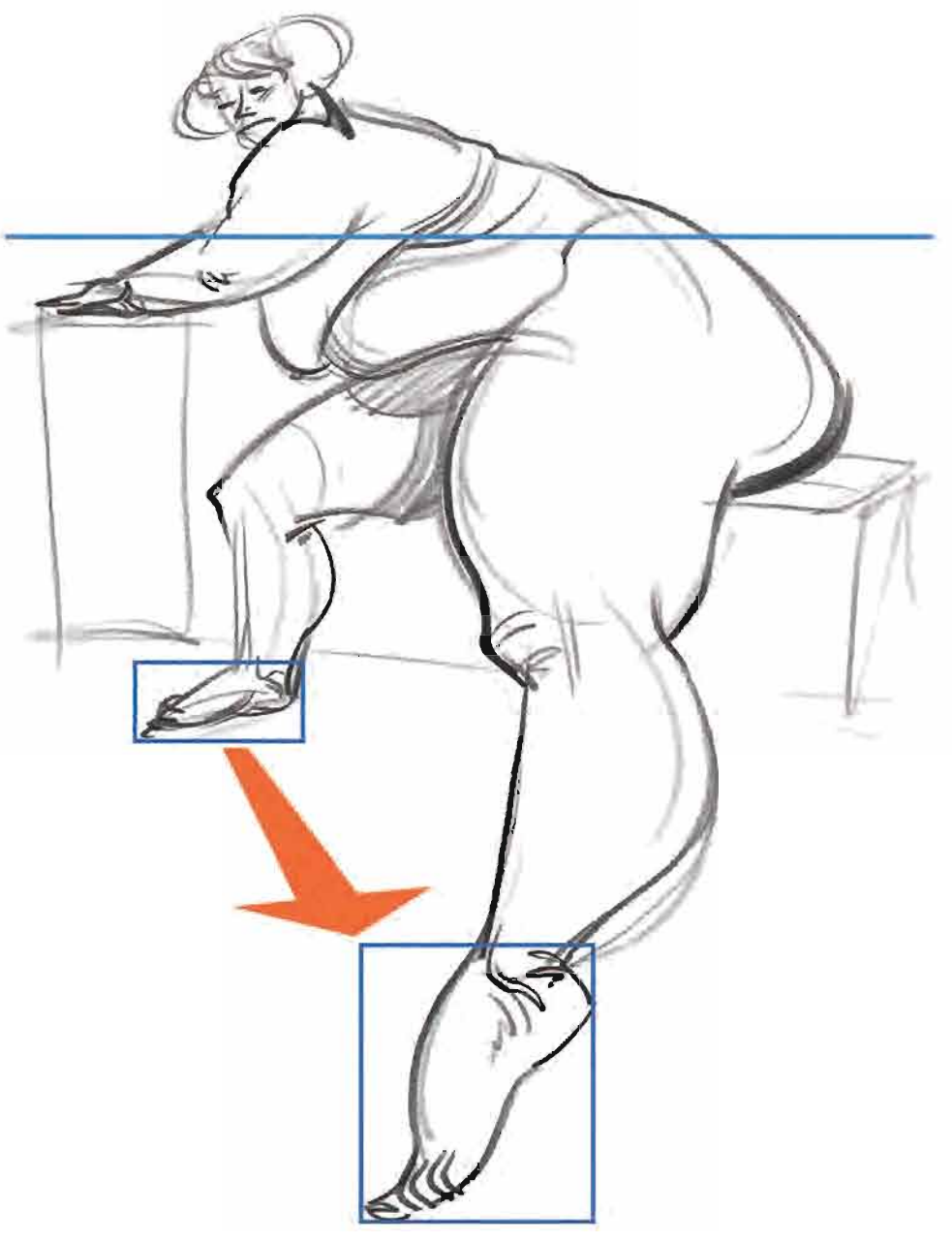
LOCATION EQUALS DEPTH



Let's uncover one last trick about depth. Location on the page or the height of one object relative to another on the page also helps define space. The first box on the left shows that perspective could be going in either direction. Is the horizon high or low on the page? Hard to tell. In the middle box height, assisted by size, makes us think that the horizon line is low on the page. The orange arrow shows the direction that space is moving outward. The third diagram shows us the opposite. It looks as though space is moving outward, going from the top to the bottom square. This would mean that the horizon line is high on the page since the smallest an object can be is right on the horizon if the object is on the same plane as you.

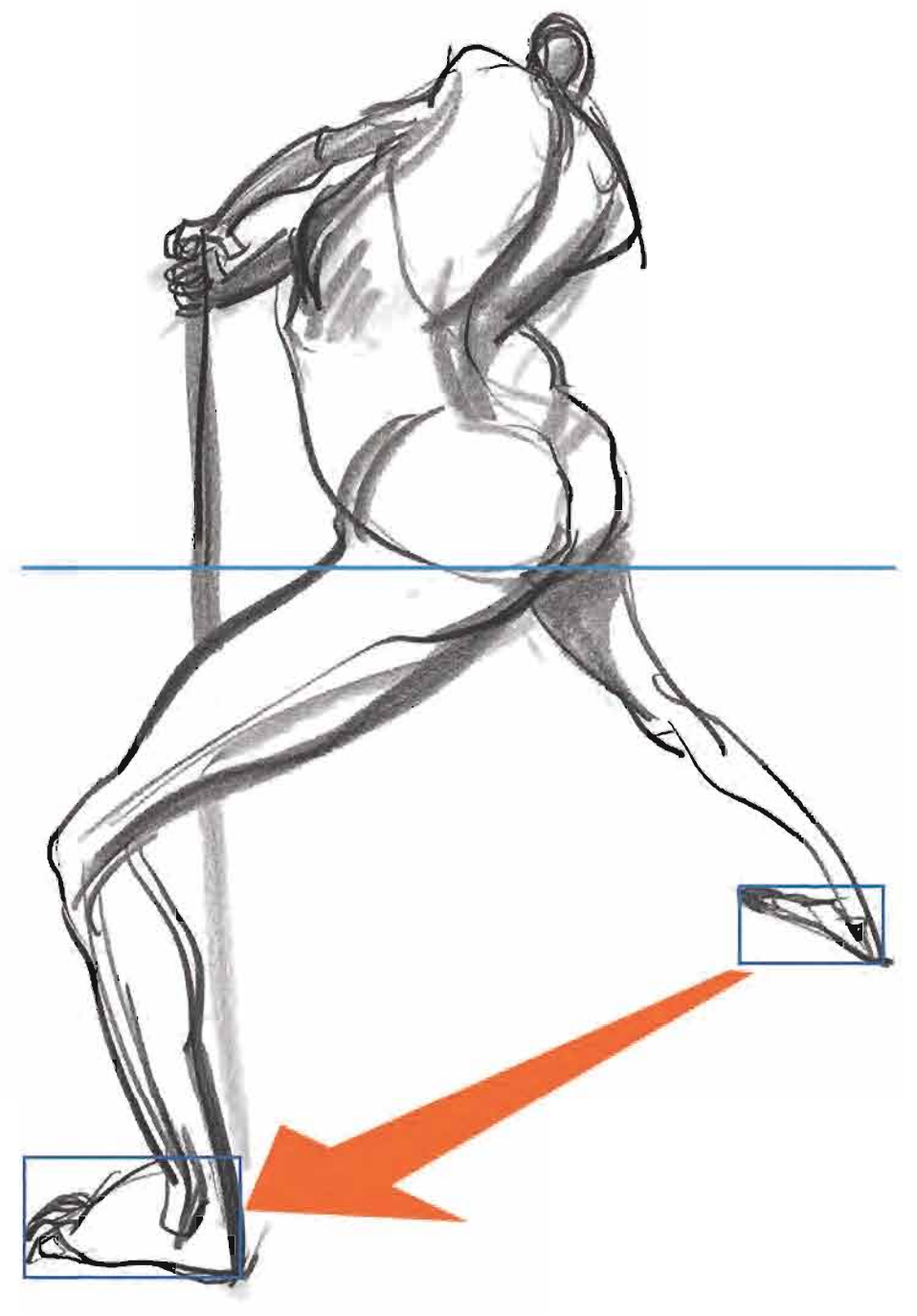


Here is a two point perspective diagram to show you why this concept works. By choosing a horizon or eye line, we can start to see how objects get smaller as they get closer to that line or get larger as they get farther away. In the drawing that follows, I will show you my eye line in creating the drawing and how the spatial bounding box works relative to the line.

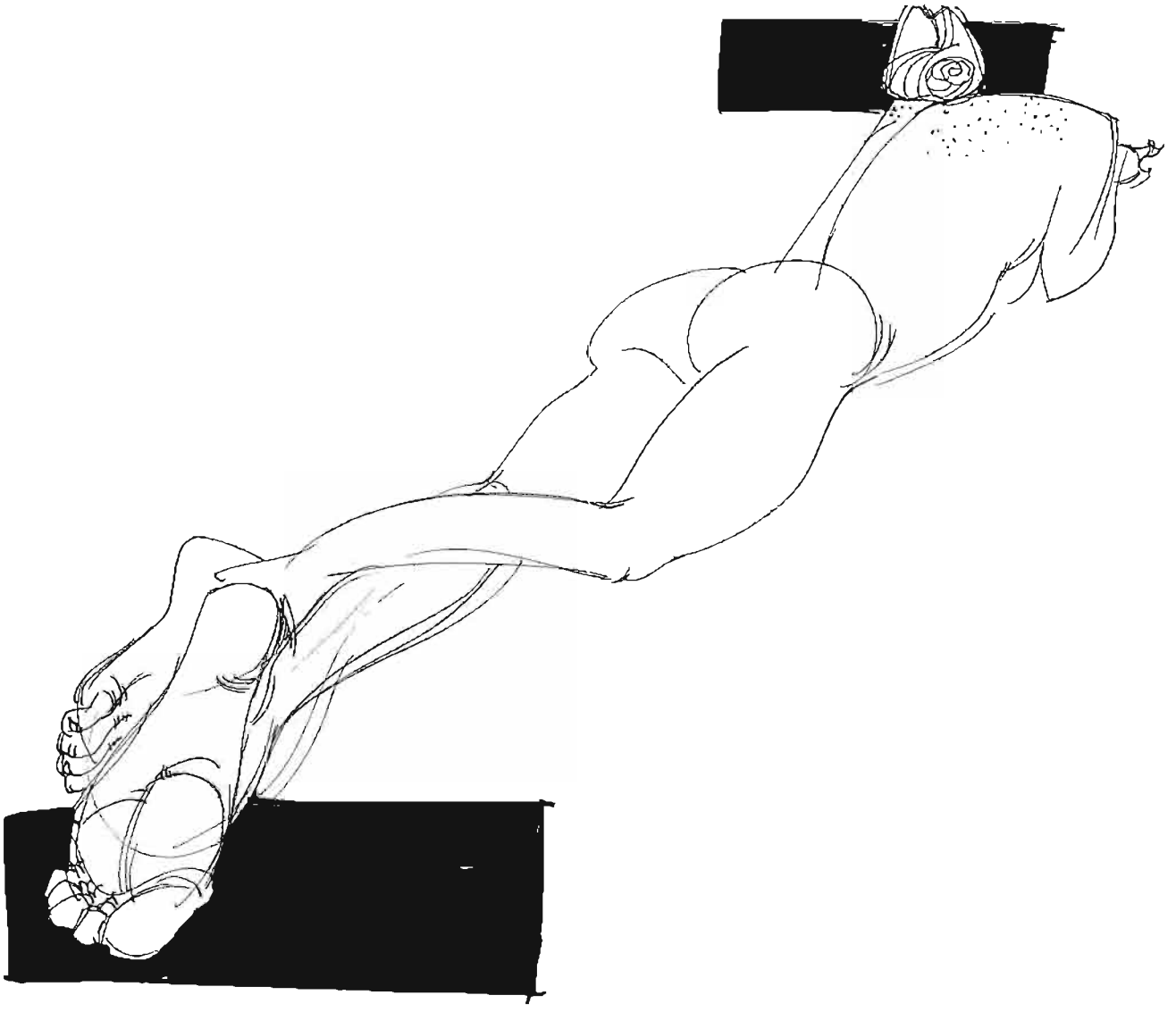


Let's test these ideas. The model's upper body is on the same plane as us. I show you this with the blue line that indicates our horizon line. We can start our ride at the model's hands and move up into the shoulder, over the upper back, and keep moving until we make our way down to the foreground foot. The change in size between the two feet is the clear contrast that defines a vast amount of depth. Connecting the feet with a line gives you an angle on the page that will lead you up to the horizon. That horizon line is your line of vision relative to the farthest location of the plane you are standing on, which more likely than not is Earth.

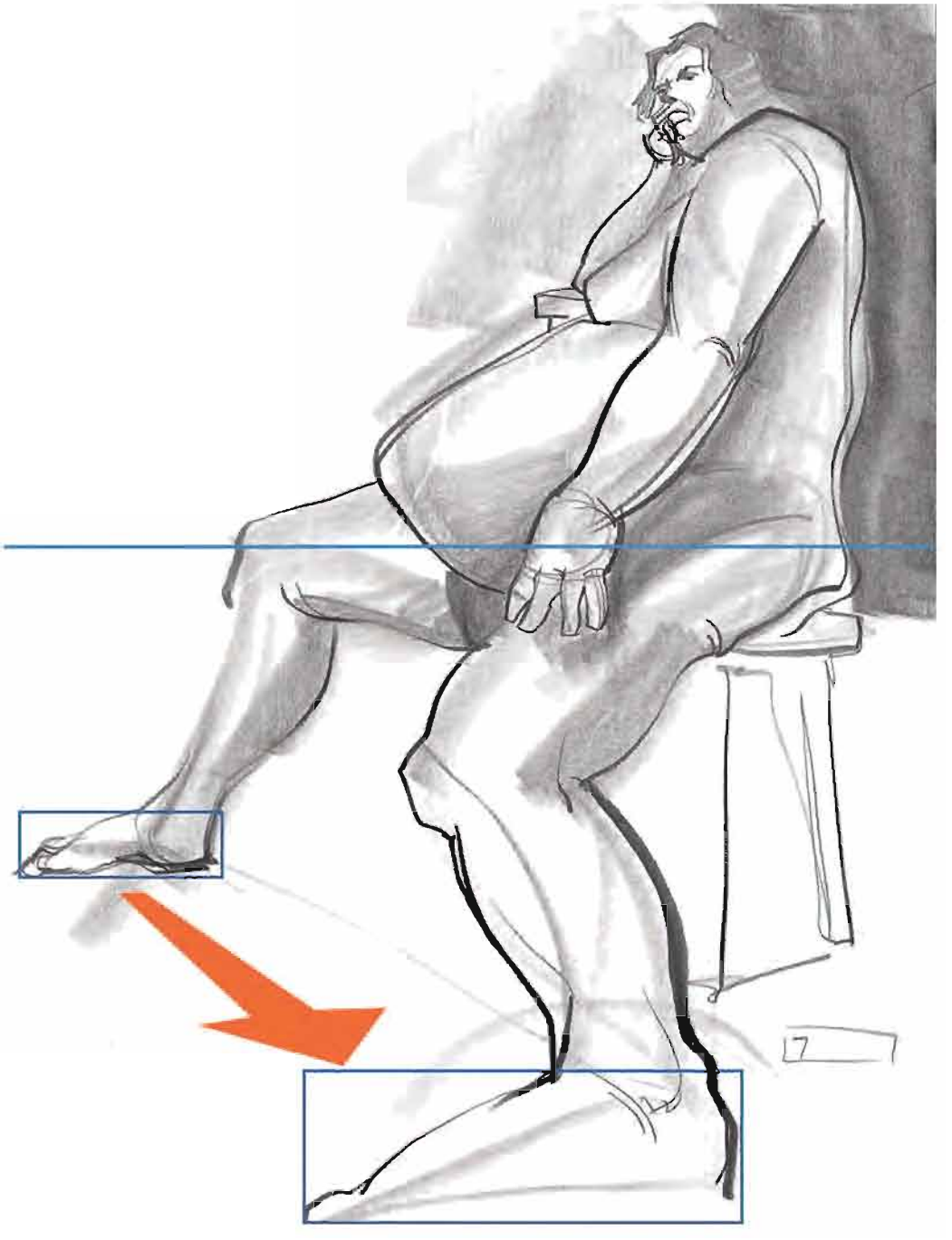
Here the model's body divides its weight between her left foot and right knee. Once again we have her feet show us the dramatic sense of depth on the page. See how small her head and hands are in comparison to that right foot. Feel how the relationship between the feet once again describes the plane the model is standing on.



I love looking at the pair of arms against the pair of legs in this image. Force still makes its way through the figure. See the vast amount of space this pose occupies because of the size and height difference between the feet.



Here is a clear example of the spatial bounding box. I actually used the concept as a design element. The head is much smaller, and the feet, which are larger, help define a bigger spatial bounding box.



Again, the extreme appendages, head and feet, define this triangular pose and the space it occupies. Keep in mind that all of these images are on flat sheets of paper. There is no depth. Your brain thinks there is and understands what it sees because the artist, me, sees the same way you do.

Exercises

1. Start off your drawings by laying down a pass of bounding boxes. Draw them relative to your ideas on what you want to bring closer to you and what you want to push into the page.

2. Take the process from above and exaggerate it even further. Make the boxes contrast in size even more. Make the large boxes larger and the small boxes, smaller.

3. Once you understand the rules of depth then you can have fun breaking them. Take something closer to you and make it smaller, then take something farther away and make it larger. You can equalize or flatten depth by making areas the size.

4. When you have models pose for you, direct them to give you poses with a lot of space.

5. Draw the model from a close proximity to notice the variety in real space.

6. Draw the model from far away. See how the amount of space she occupies diminishes. This is where you can use the spatial bounding box to recreate close proximity depth.

Chapter 3
Shape with Character

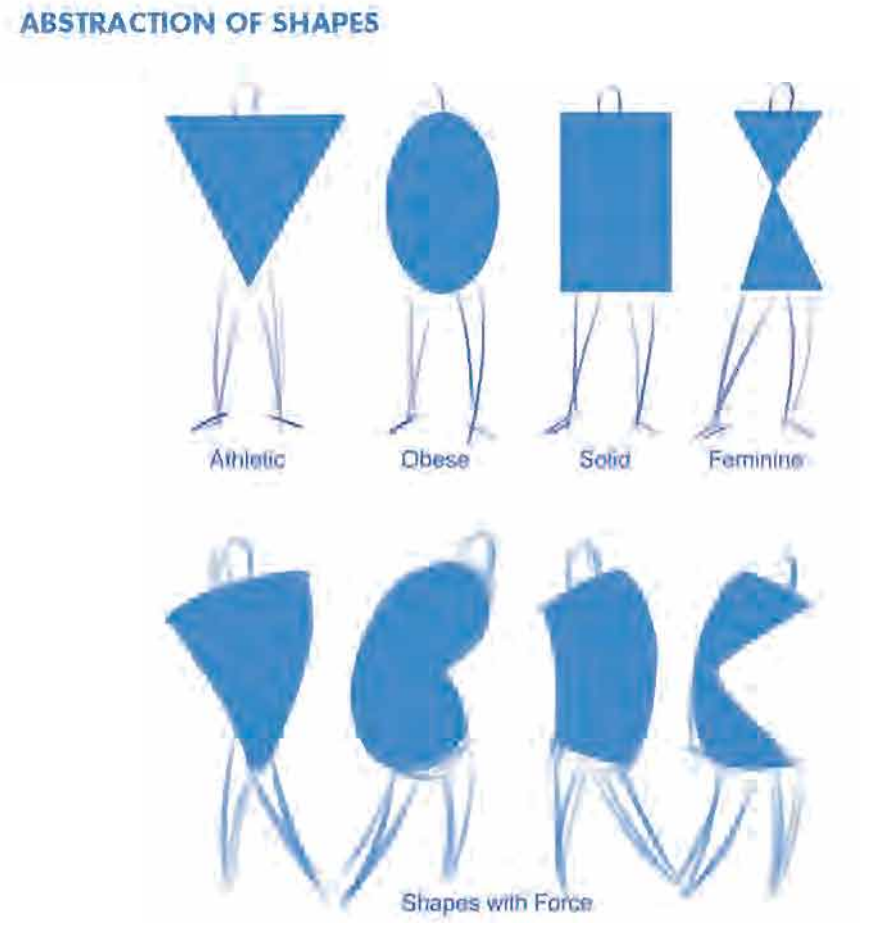
In Chapter 2 I mentioned the importance of understanding depth and flatness at the same time in art. Shape makes this point real clear. You may draw dimensionally but you can still outline a silhouette. This immediately gives an image a sense of flatness. Drawings can start to feel like a jigsaw puzzle. You start seeing how one puzzle piece fits perfectly into another. You start to shape design the large, medium, and small shapes. Remember, you are still working on a flat plane.

As children, we start the act of drawing through simple shapes. As we become teenagers and young adults, we travel through a period of striving for reality in the art. Ironically, in maturity it is a return to childhood that balances out our interpretation of our world. Let's return back to a tiny sliver of childhood and look at some shapes.

Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up.
Pablo Picasso

When learning how to draw, it is form that creates shape. There is no silhouette to see without a form to create it. Be aware of jumping into shape too early. It can quickly become a crutch and lead you to weak drawings with no structure.

After fully understanding form, there are many times that I will start a drawing with shape first and then fill it with form. Drawing in this order allows you to push your creativity. It is more complex to start drawing an idea from a form instead of a shape. Your initial shape may need some tweaking to properly fill it with form, but you will at least have an interesting launch point.



Above are some basic shapes—the triangle, oval, rectangle, and a double triangle. They are static because of their symmetry. What is interesting to note here is that at this basic level they already imply character. Below, I have added some force to these shapes. You can see how easily they come to life.

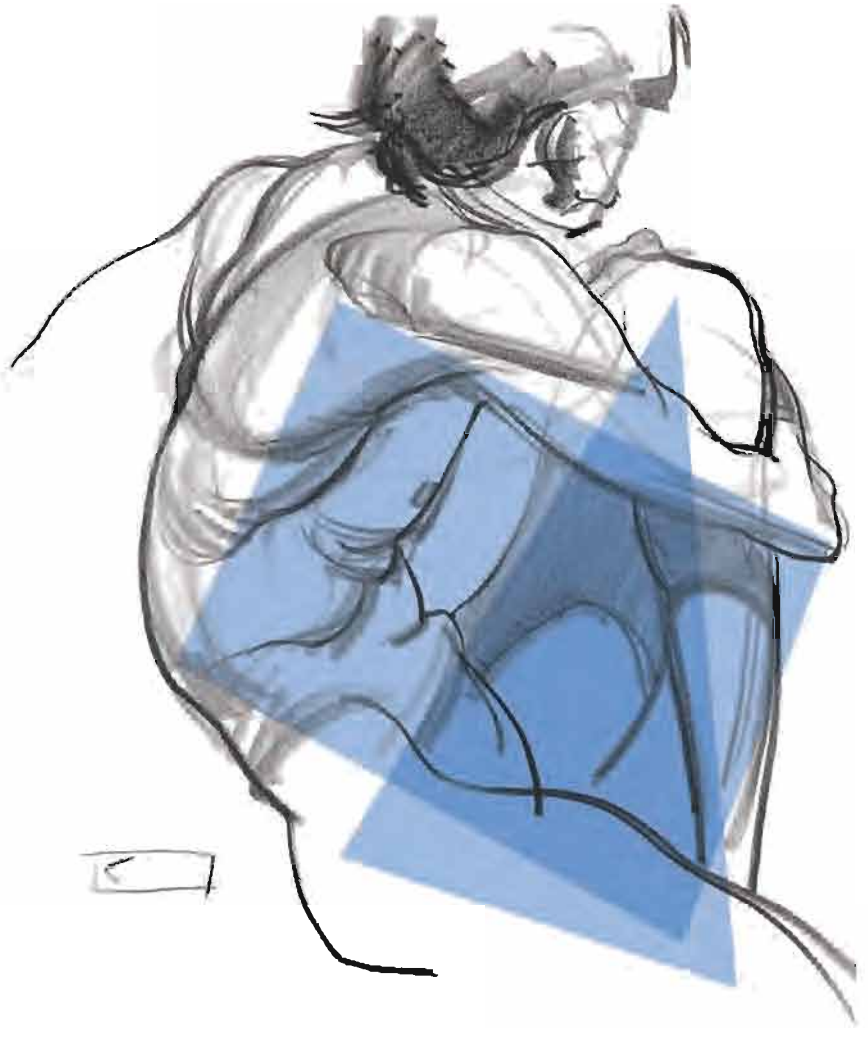
Typically, each of these shapes has some general emotional relationship to us.

Triangle: With its point downward, the triangle can represent an athletic figure. It is also often used for villains because of its pointiness and dynamism. Precariousness could also be implied by it trying to balance on its point. Flipped around, where the point is on top, the triangle suggests solidity, like a pyramid, unmoving. The triangle is the most dynamic of all basic shapes because of its strong angles. Used with force, it is like an arrow, directing energy from one location to another.

Circle (Oval): This shape is considered the friendliest of the shape family. No pointy or dangerous corners. In the real world, typically things that are round are soft and safe. It is no accident that Mickey Mouse's head and ears are circles. Our pupils, the windows to the soul, are circles.

Square (rectangle): This shape defines strength. If stretched horizontally, it feels like a solid base or foundation. Vertically, it is like a column of strength. This is the shape I love using for size and proportion in design.

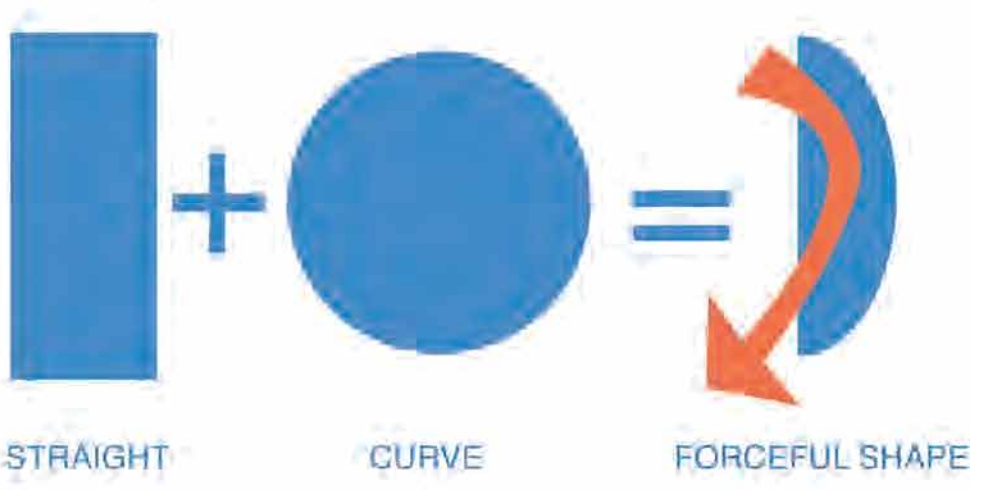
One way of using just these preliminary shapes is to see them at the top of the pyramid in the pose. Does the model look like a rectangle, triangle, or circle. Maybe a pose contains multiple shape ideas. DO NOT get trapped into drawing the model in this method, it is NOT Forceful. In fact it is quite dead. **The shapes are abstract parameters of the figure for placement relationships**. Here is an example.



Here I shaped out for you the triangle created by the back leg and the rectangle that is created by the arm, back, and lower leg. Again, I don't draw these ideas because they don't excite me with passion through the theory of force, they are quick abstract thoughts to help me with the placement of the figure. Students constantly ask me about proportion. As I have mentioned before, proportion is a secondary thought to me while force is the forefront. This is a great way of obtaining proportion without measuring every line and having that process take over your drawing experience.

FORCEFUL SHAPE

Let's get back to Forceful shapes. My first book on force (*Force: Dynamic Life Drawing for Animators*) covers this philosophy in extreme detail. Let's take a quick look at it again.



Just to refresh our minds on the concept of forceful shape, what we want to find are straight to curved shapes or something that looks like the letter "D" or half a pie. The straight represents structure and the curve represents force. Here is how the idea of straights and curves combined creates forceful shape!

This design concept is so simple and powerful. When I instruct, this shape clearly defines what is working and what is not in a drawing. The key is seing shapes even though you are looking at a line drawing.

Here is a more traditional drawing that was founded on the straight to curve or forceful shape concept. The straight line of the back clearly defines the forward thrust of the chest.

The straight to curve here is the opposite in its function. The curve is in the back and the straight is the chest. See the shape also in the lower left leg. The front of the shin is the straight and the back is the curve. All of the figure is designed with shape, some areas are just more obvious than others.

This is the last example for forceful shape at its iconic simplicity. Again, I used it in the ribcage area. The back is the curve and the front of the chest is the straight. The right thigh is another obvious example. The front of the thigh is the curve and the hamstring is the straight.

In my book *Force: Dynamic Drawing for Animators,* I discussed the rules of straight to curve design in depth to create these forceful shapes. In the last few years, I have discovered a new way of instructing students about this concept by using cut paper. I have my classes cut out D-shaped pieces of paper before the model takes the pose. Then, students glue stick these shapes on the page relative to the forces they understand in the figure. After sticking down these shapes they draw the figure on top of them. This is an excellent way to comprehend straight to curve or forceful design. Remember, the curve represents force and the straight, structure.

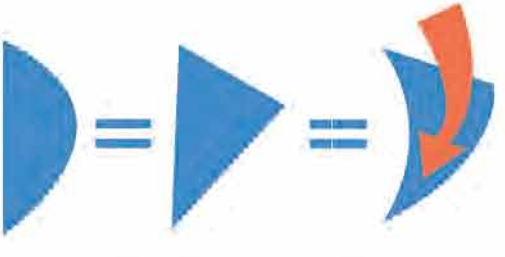
Try this exercise. It causes you to make clear decisions. That clarity allows for the realization of what direction the shape must be in to function! Let's look at some examples.

Forceful shape is used in the back. The curve defines the directional force that came from the neck and applied itself in the peak of the back. What I find of great interest in this image is the flat shape of the brown cut paper versus the depth created by the lines drawn on top of it.

The areas I designed with the forceful cut out shapes are the ribcage and the model's left leg. The ribcage is thrusting upward with the straight of the back supporting it. The same occurs in the leg. As an added bonus, I added the student drawing behind the model. Notice how small he is. Again, your mind immediately understands that the student is a certain distance away from the model.

Throughout the rest of the book, I will apply the shape concept through digital overlays. Again, this exercise with cut paper is a must. The speed with which clarity is received on forceful shape is high.

THE FORCEFUL TRIANGLE

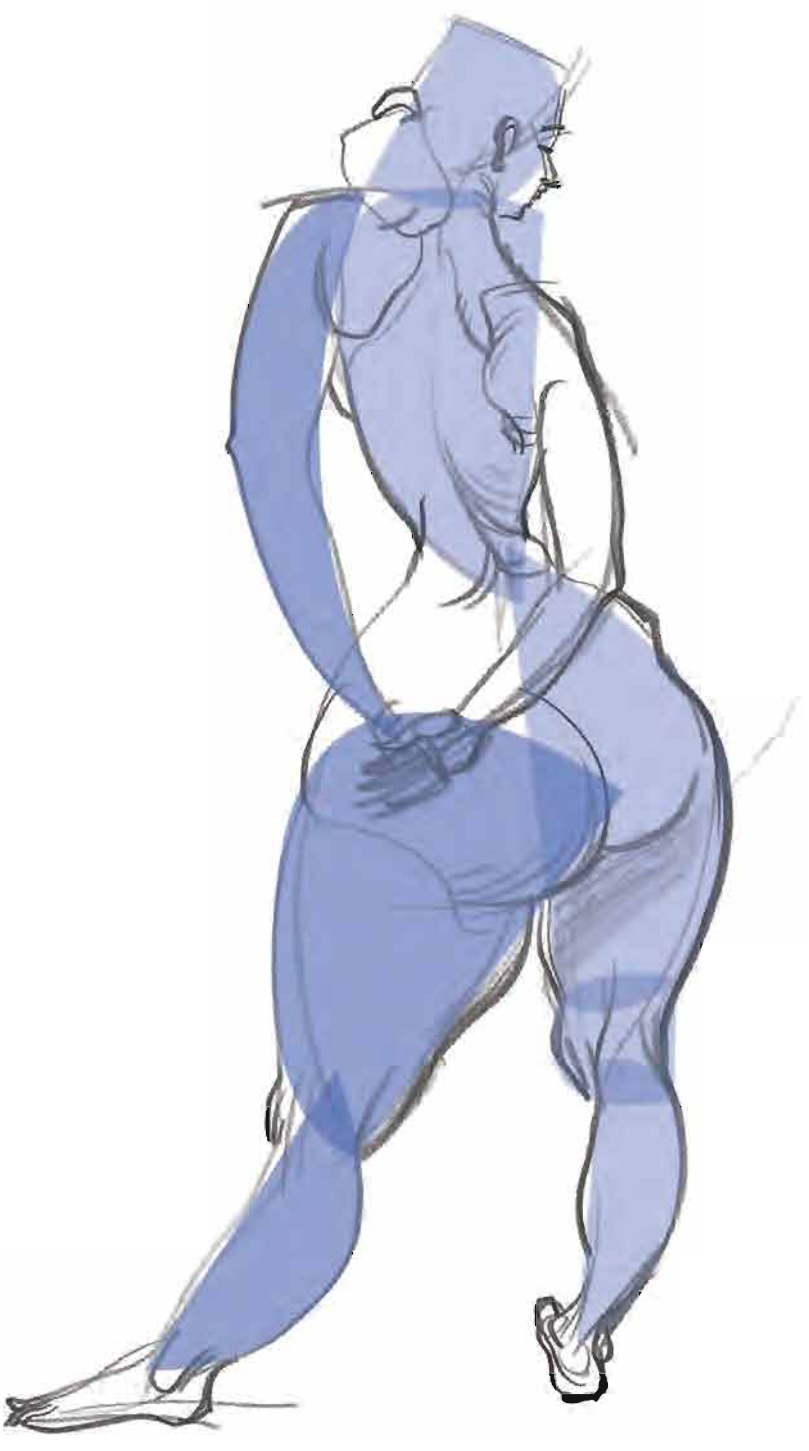


Evolution of the Forceful Triangle

Now let's take our forceful shape and make it less graphic and more organic. First we take the three points of the forceful shape. The third point is the peak of the curve. This gives us a triangle. We slightly bend our straight side and start to create a flexible triangle. This triangle is a powerful shape. The triangle, because of its point, innately points in a direction, like an arrowhead. Having one triangle point itself to another creates rhythm with shape.

Just to up the ante of this concept, remember that force is hierarchal (look in the Key Concepts section at the front of the book), meaning look at it from big to small ideas. So, let's take this shape and use it to see the abstraction of an ENTIRE pose or, the full pyramid. That's right, we can now take the pyramid/triangle and have it actually represent the entire pose.

Here it is! I have defined the pose with a rhythmic triangle. This triangle shows us the big idea or the full hierarchical pyramid. The top half of the triangle pushes right and the bottom of the triangle pushes to the left. You can see these energies in the model's ribcage and hips. I then went in and defined the multiple rhythms with the forceful shapes that clarify those concepts.



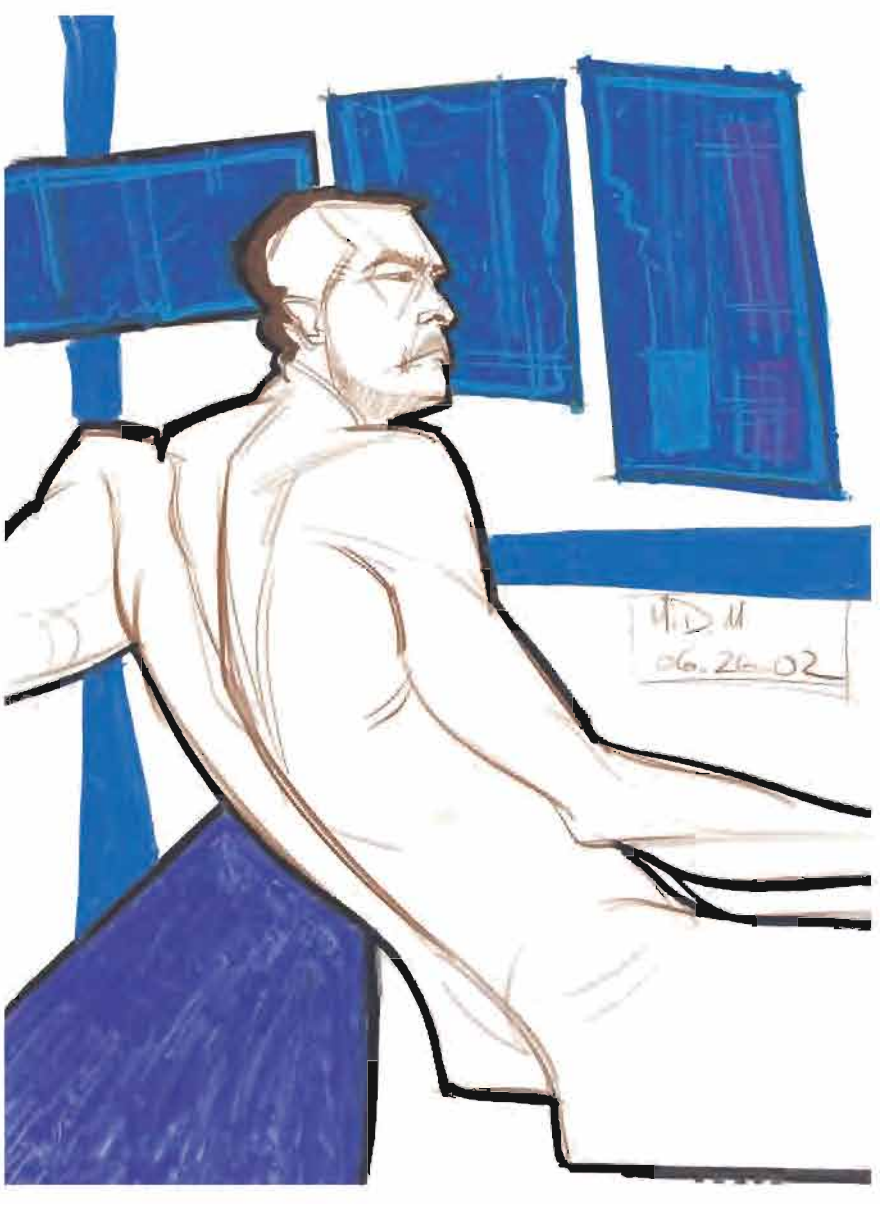
This drawing of the same model shows the shift in the hips moving in the opposite direction. See the straight of the right side of the ribcage and the curved left side. This curve of the ribcage slides into the curve of the hip. It then travels into the knee and down into the right side of the calf. See the clear forceful triangle of the left arm.

Here is another example of forceful shape as the focal thought in execution. See how there is not much interior line to determine form. It is primarily determined by the overlapping of the shapes.

Our last drawing of clear straight to forceful shape design used to exaggerate the figure reveals itself in the ribcage and thighs. Look more closely and you will also see it in the shin, arm, ear, and eyelids.

THE BRILLIANT BOUNDING BOX RETURNS

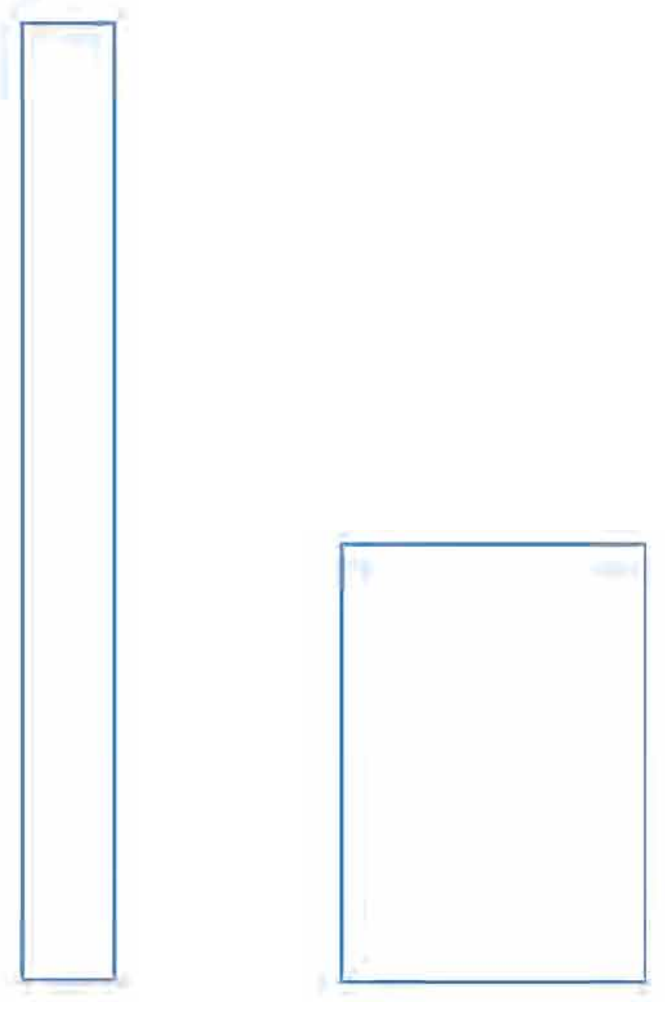
Years back, a friend of mine would hold drawing sessions in his studio. I was teaching four classes at the time and this personal drawing time let me further my own experiences with the model. Out of those sessions came the drawing below.



This drawing was at the beginning of my journey into abstraction with flat, inorganic shapes. As simple as it may seem, just playing with these abstract shapes against the design of the male nude was a real breakthrough in a figure drawing environment for me. The three boxes in the background became design elements. Notice how I started breaking those boxes down into smaller boxes. Look at the shape in the lumbar region of the back. Notice how it suggests perspective but just like any other shape on the page, it is FLAT!

These abstract shapes bring me back to the infamous bounding box. This time, though, it is not spatial but used for ratio so it is our **ratio bounding box**. What is so important about this? Well once again, your mind will be able to fill the simple shape of a box because it is so simple. This accessibility allows you to be more opinionated and creative. The real challenge is to have an opinion based on truth or you could push or pull in the wrong direction.

Seeing abstractly is one of the keys to great design.

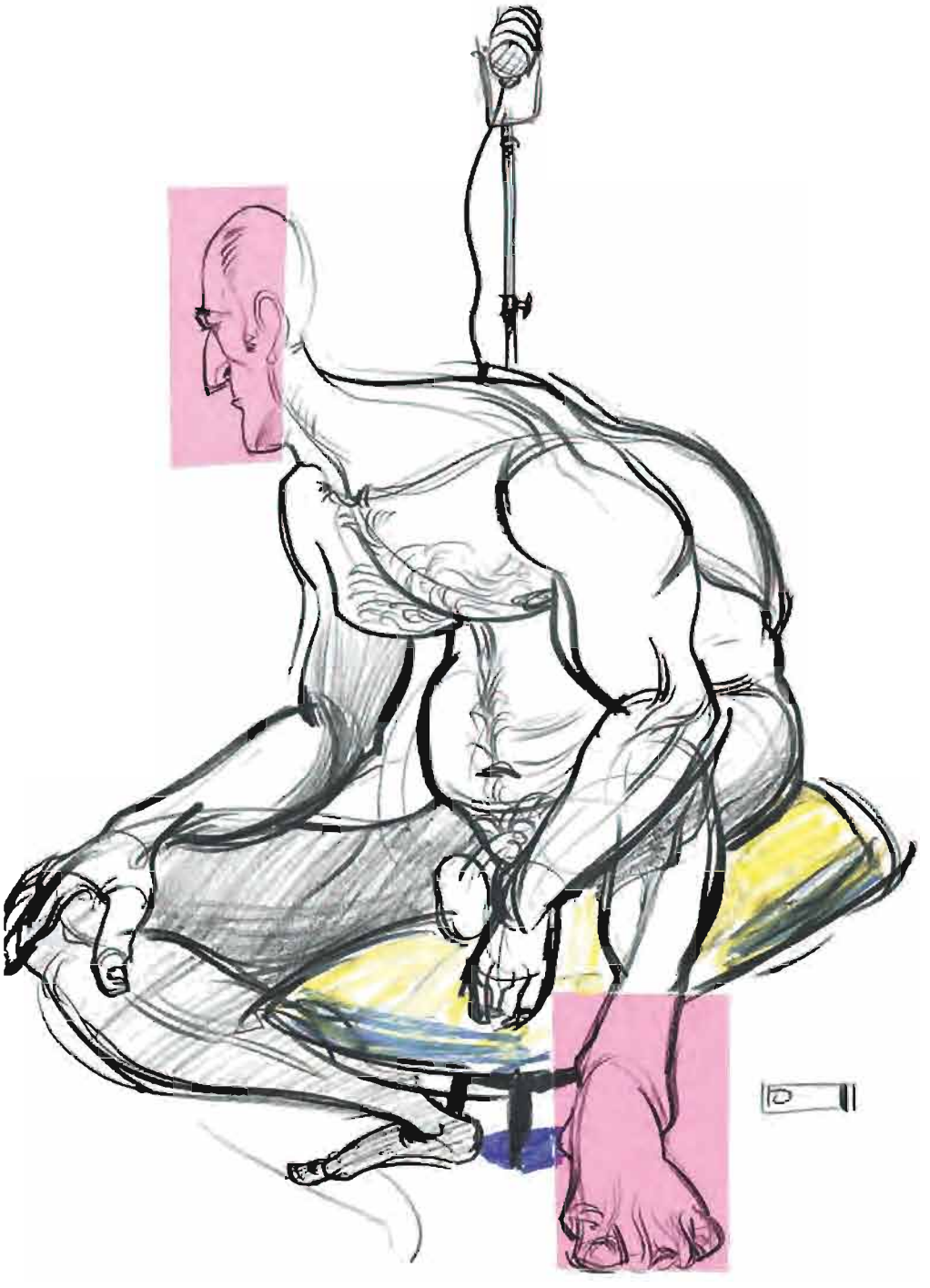


So here we see two simple boxes. Starting with what they have in common, they are both rectangles. They are both taller than they are wide and they have the same color perimeter. The difference between is what is most important. One is taller and thinner than the other.

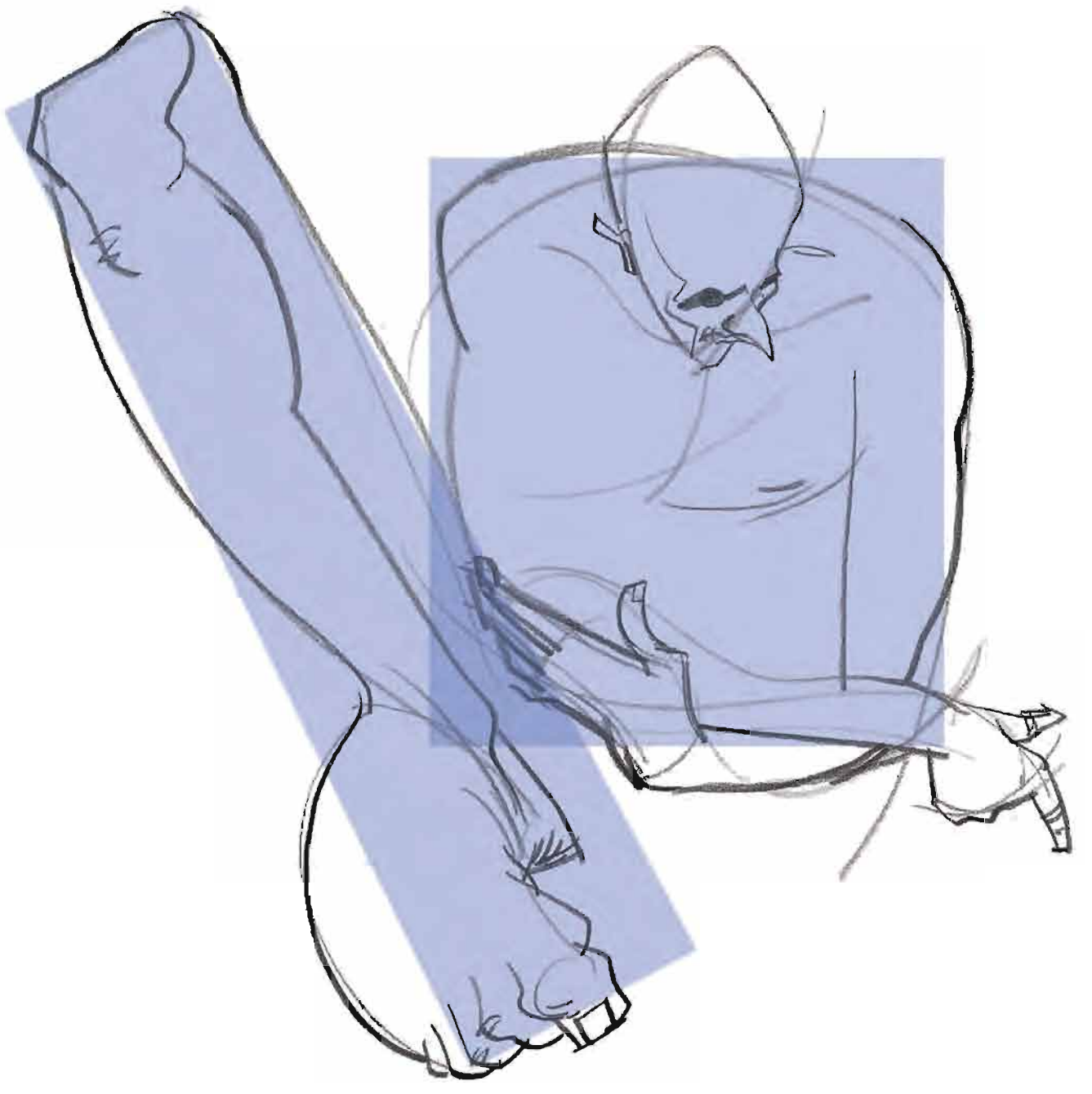
A great way to start with the concept of the ratio bounding box is to put the entire figure in a box. Once again cut paper is an excellent tool for you committing to your ideas and staying clear with your thoughts. I love the way the flat box filled with the weight, fluidity, and structure of the model sits on the tiny bench. The long orange horizontal box is just an accentuation to bring focus to the head.

This drawing has three bounding boxes. Each one defines different areas of the figure. The box for the hand assisted me in stretching it horizontally while the one for the foot made it larger and brought it closer to me. The pink one was to define the acreage of the figure.

In creating these long, yellow rectangles, I give myself the freedom to manipulate any part of the figure I want. Keep in mind, the shape of the paper is determined by my opinion. So with the hand, for instance, I felt that is should be vertically long because I was after the hanging feel it gave me. His head felt more horizontal than vertical. The red box assisted me in the idea of design.

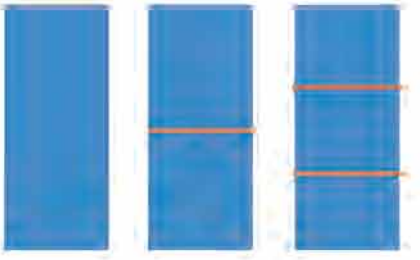


In creating this image, I pasted the pink squares and decided prior to the model taking the pose that one would represent the head and the other, one of the feet. Well, this presented a challenge when the model's foot in reality was much farther to the left than in my layout. I had to lengthen the back and make the force still hook up from the head to the foot. This restriction allowed for the creation of this design.

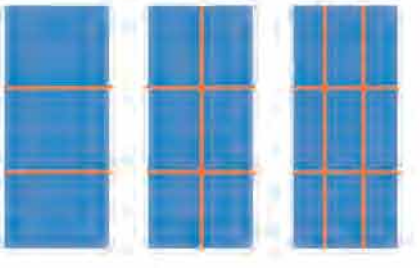


This drawing is our first without cut paper to assist in the designing of the model. Here we have a falling rectangle and a stable box. I also played with the space relationship of the head to the foot. This drawing is a clear example of fitting the figure inside predetermined shapes.

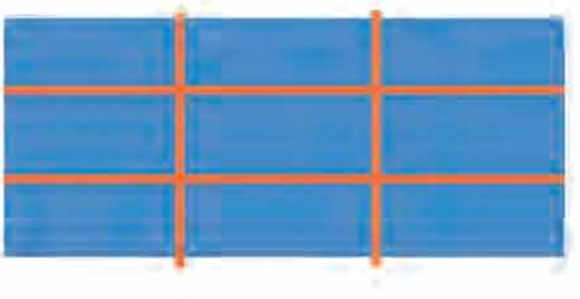
THE LAW OF THIRDS



The law of thirds is a crucial design law. The box on the left shows no divisions. The second box shows a half-way division. This immediately causes symmetry. That means that the top and bottom of the box or the figure are the same. It is this sameness that we are trying to avoid in our work. Our minds want to create symmetry and the irony is that this causes disinterest in art. Remember, contrast creates interest. So, that leads us to our third box on the right. Here I have divided it into thirds!

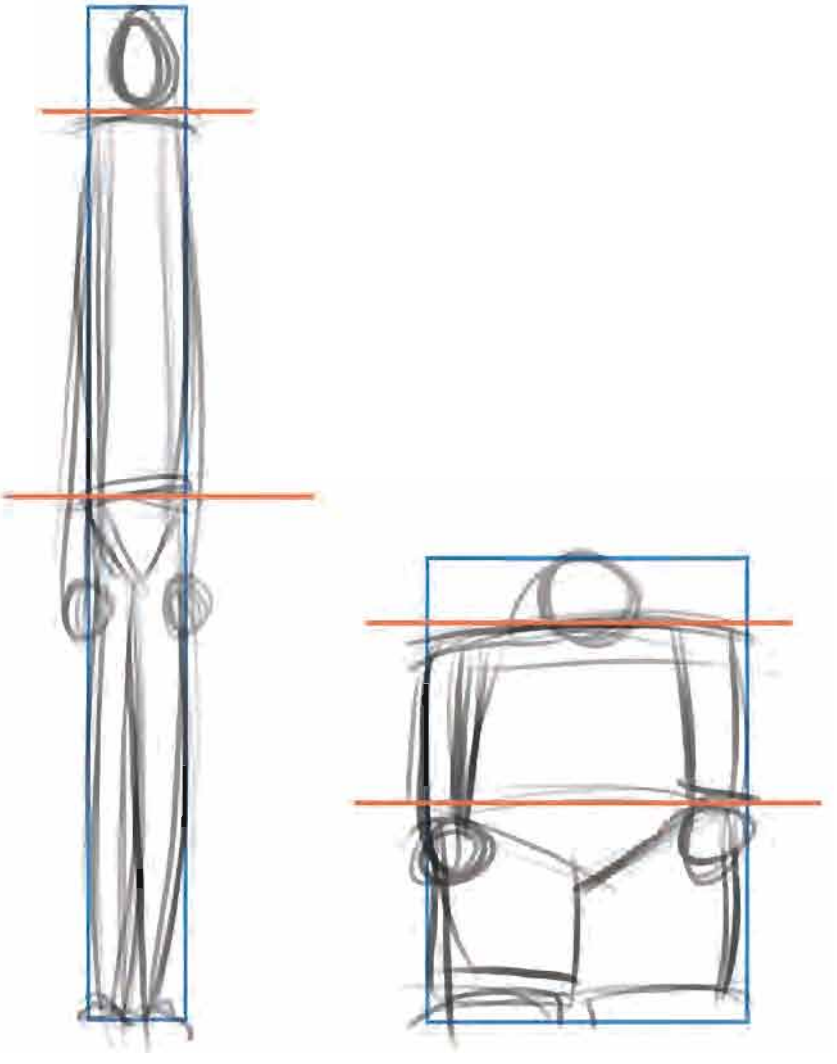


Now I have taken our box that is split into thirds in its vertical height and in the second image split it in half from left to right. This waters down our design again. In the last image we have the iconic image of design in thirds, our rectangle divided in thirds, vertically and horizontally. Remember this image!

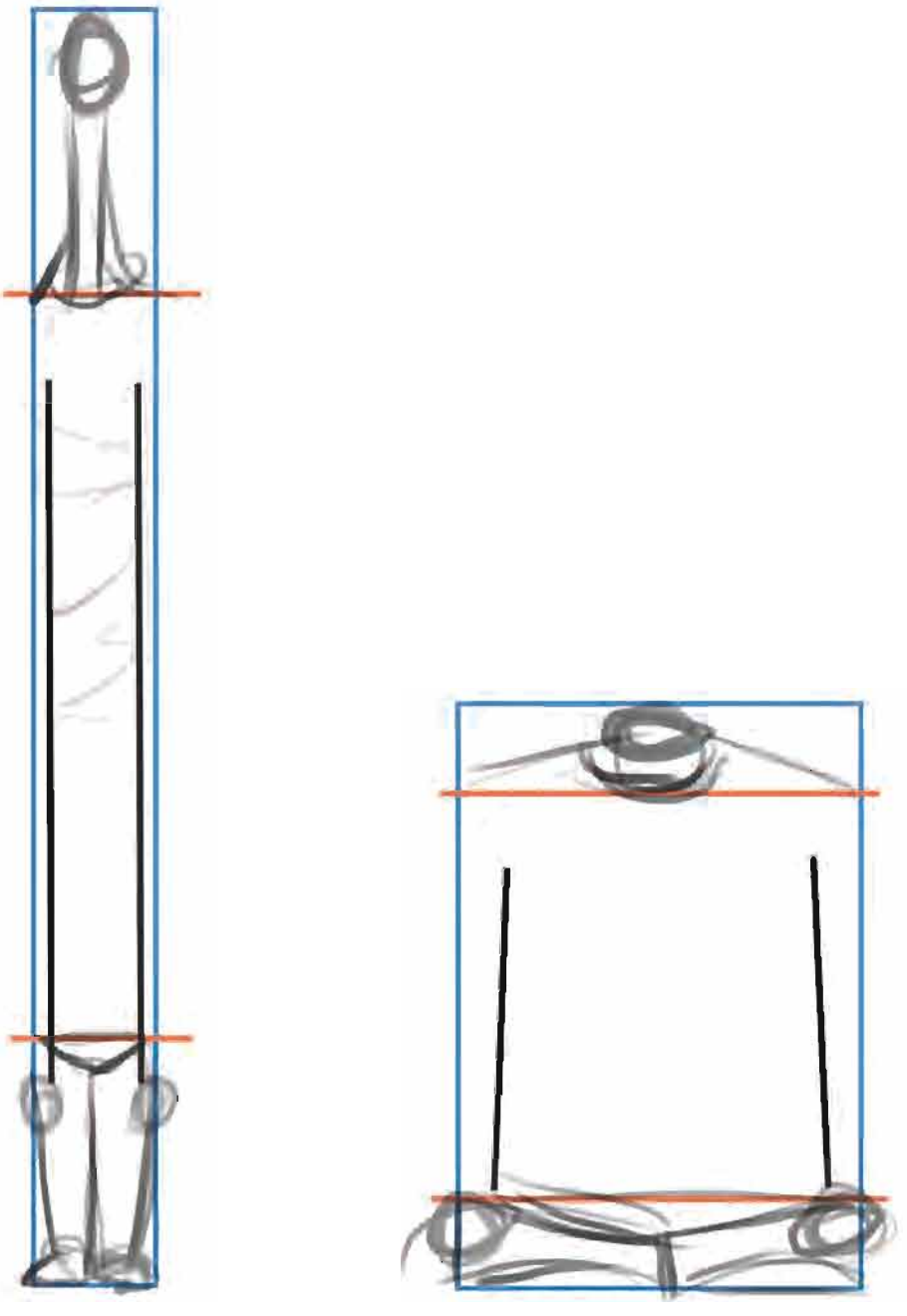


Here is our iconic box on its side. You can use the rectangle this way also. This grid is great to use in studying film. Later in the book, you will see research of mine from film. This box is one of the tools I always use in analyzing composition.

The law of thirds can also pertain to the dynamic shape of the triangle. The number three is a powerful number. In general, you want to stay away from even numbers because they have a tendency to create symmetry. The number one does also. Between the forceful triangle and the rules of thirds, you should be able to create dynamic designs if you so desire.

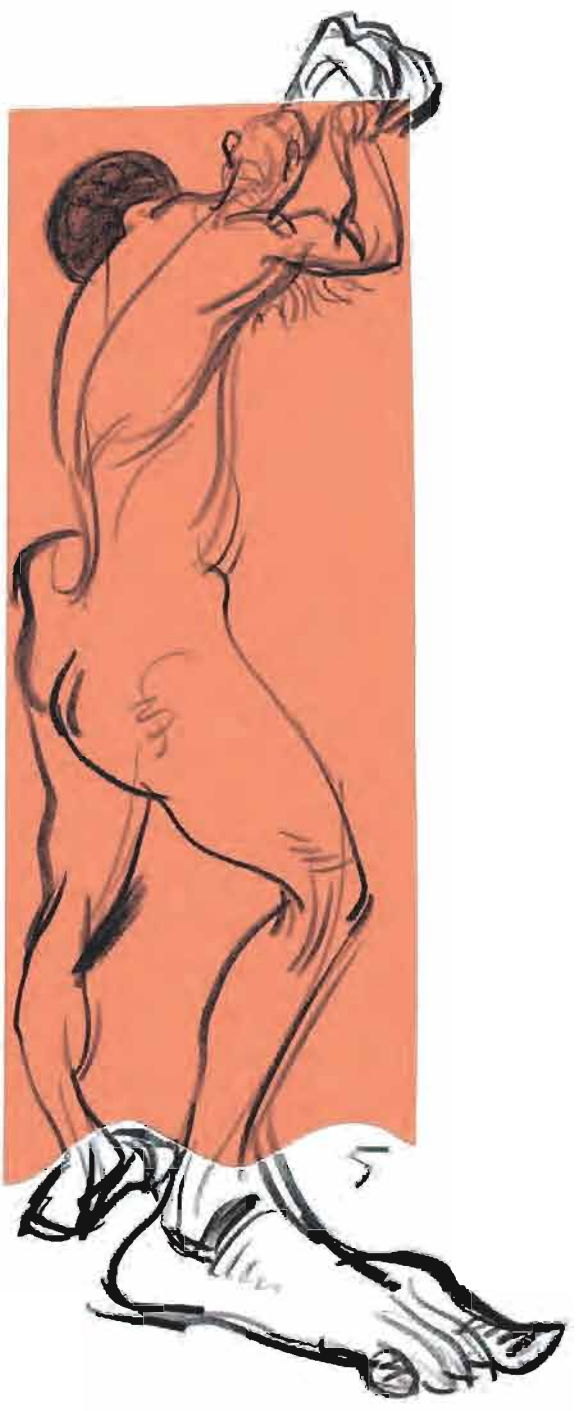


So here we see a figure confined to the parameters of the bounding box. See how powerful this tool is? We have a tall, thin character and a shorter more squat character. I gave them general vertical proportions. They both have their waist around the center of the rectangle. Now, let's play with ratios.



I have pushed the shoulder line upward and brought the waistline downward. With this simple adjustment, we have new, interesting characters. Look at the amount of rich variety created by sliding these simple horizontal ratio lines up and down relative to one another. Simple right? This is so darn simple that it becomes powerful. Now I did this with the full shape of the figure. You can do this with any area as long as you have a clear reason or opinion as to why you are doing it. You can also apply this concept by sliding vertical lines.

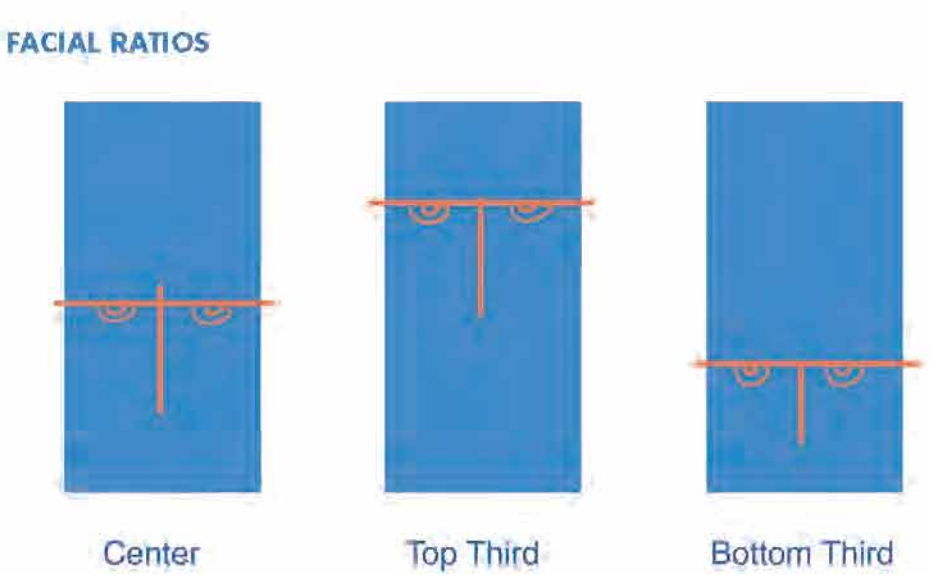
This drawing presents my preliminary bounding boxes. If we look within each bounding box as a separate design, we can make assessments as to if they are broken into thirds. The box for the ribcage shows a great division with the breast line at the top third of the box. The horizontal leg, on the other hand, shows the seam of the stocking right in the center of the box. It would have been more interesting if I had pushed the seam closer to the body or the knee.



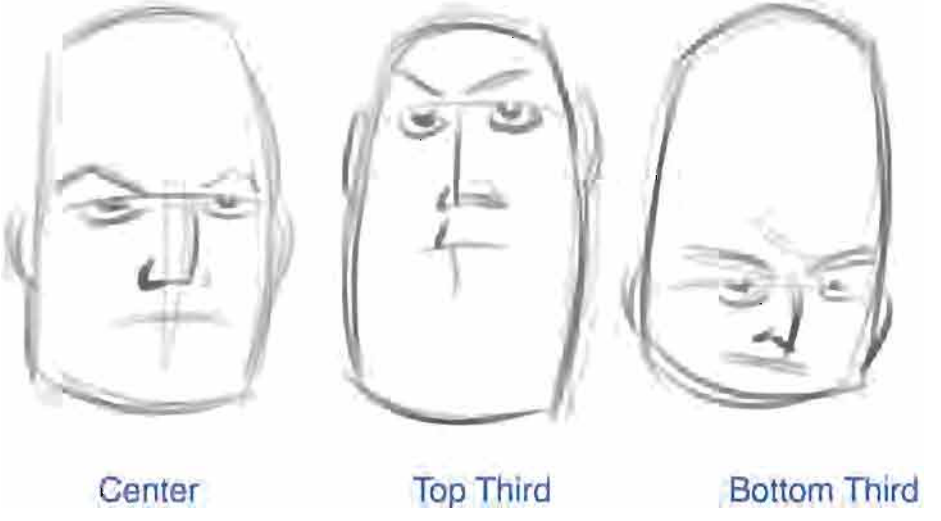
I saw the main section of the figure as the legs, trunk, and head with the hands and feet beyond the parameters of the box. I then played with the proportions of those areas once they left the box. I like the way the hands rest on top of the box the figure is drawn within.

This decision about the proportion of the box came from the model and her pose. Look at how the rectangle is divided in thirds. Her head, chest, and hips are all occupying a third of the main rectangle. I then used color and value to assist the image. I applied a hot orange red for her sensuality but kept her skin bone white. To further pronounce the red, I placed a green box in the design. Lastly, I designed circular shapes in the background to accentuate her femininity. I like the opposing angles of her facial direction to that of her shoulder.

This page layout was designed prior to the time period with the model. The ratio bounding boxes allowed me to tell a visual story about the pose. I really enjoy the arm and the solution to the hand. The small square box became the perimeter for the fingers and that created a long palm.

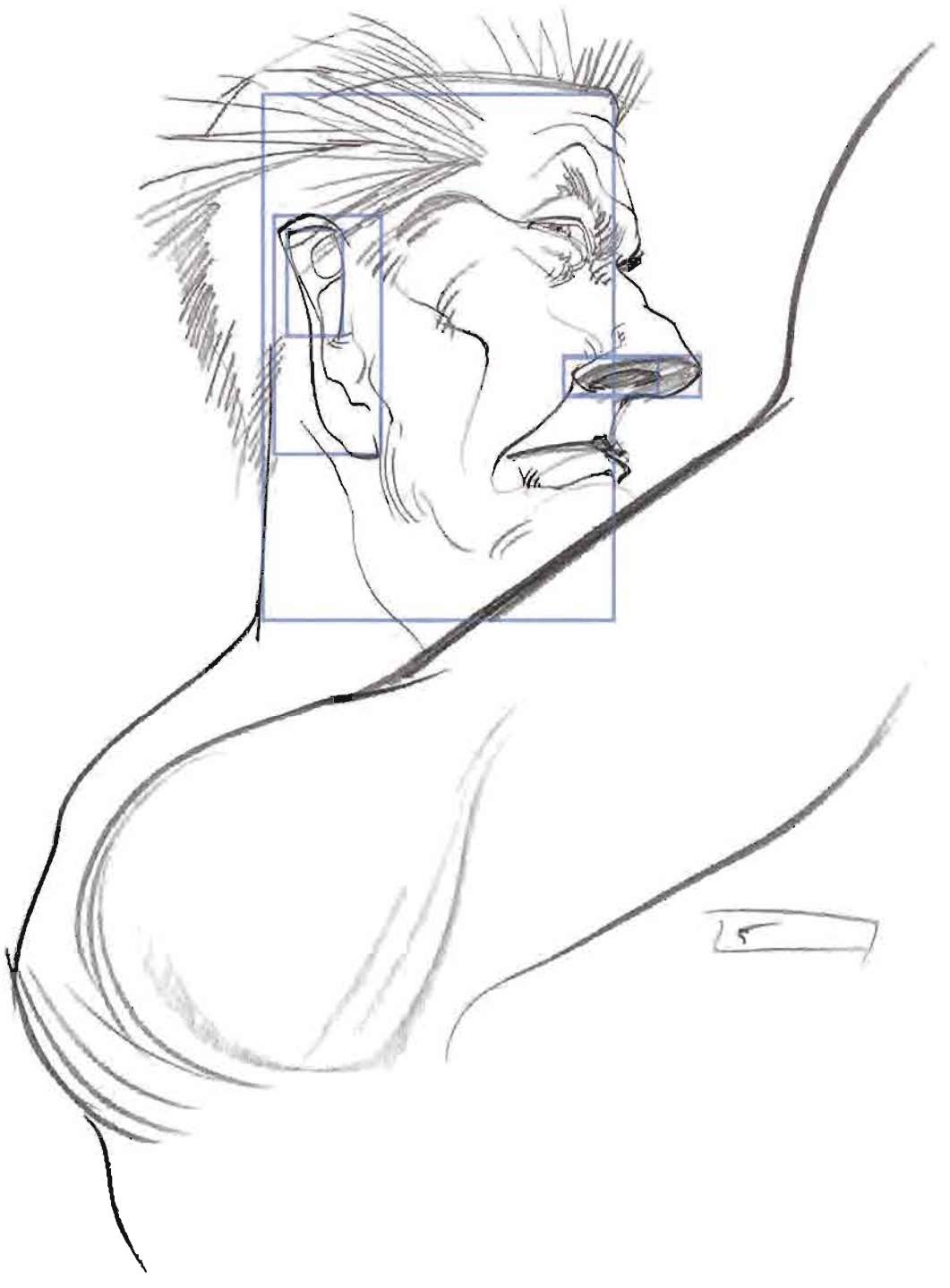


Here is the same "thirds" concept with a face. The face is represented by the rectangle. It could be any shape. I chose the rectangle. Look at what happens when we move the eye line away from its typical center. At the simplest level, because the second shows the line brought to a top third, the cranium is assigned less real estate and the jaw is given more. In the last image the cranium is assigned the majority of real estate when the jaw is given the smaller amount. What does this mean to character?



Let's take a look at some line drawings with these ratios. Notice how the drawing to the left feels the most generic and comfortable. The middle one can make the character feel tough or dumb ... or both. The drawing to the right makes our character feel smart or baby like.

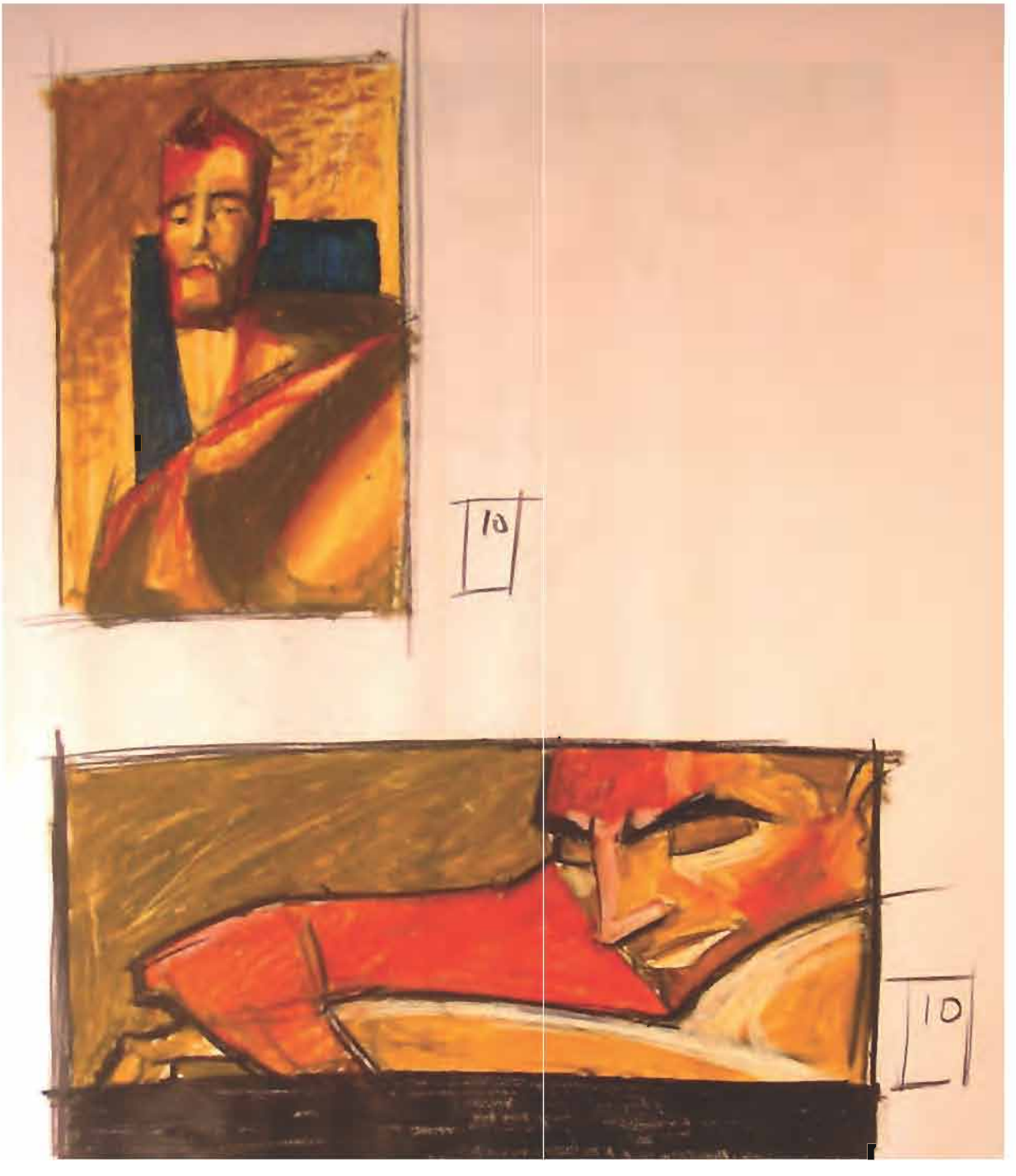
This is a demonstration I did for class at Nickelodeon that shows how taking the simple ratio bounding box idea allows you to take control of your opinions. You can see how I pushed and pulled the model's head in different directions relative to the static reality.



I broke this portrait down into ratio bounding boxes. The first box of course is the head. Then, we can work our way down in size. The ear is next and the inside of the ear is less than a third of the ear bounding box. Then, the same happens with the nose. The bottom of the nose is a box and the nostril is two-thirds of that bounding box.

The next two drawings are of the same model. This one is obviously more real. I present it to you as a comparison to the following drawing.

See how I pushed around the ratios of the model's head. Long forehead and compression of his face are two ideas that I used off the top. Shape was also a strong filter for me in looking at his hair and facial features.



Here again, I picked an area of the figure to crop and design. The colors have also been designed into shapes. Notice the complementary reds and greens with the golden yellow right in between the two. I'm not sure if you have noticed this yet, but I try to stay away from a perfect square. I love the stretched proportions of these rectangles. This allows for asymmetry right from the beginning.

Exercises

1. In the beginning, we start with fitting the entire figure in the box to help see the overall proportion and design of a pose.
2. Use the concept of proportion to state your opinion.
3. Think of the power of simple shapes but keep them fluid.
4. Draw an entire pose with just rectangles. Then go back and fill them with the fluid shapes and proportions that you predetermined.
5. Predesign a page with shapes, like a comic book. Then go into your figure-drawing session and try to tell a story with the drawings.
6. Apply shapes to assist you with proportion and design.
7. Create multiple designs based off of forceful shapes from the figure and then try to have these different moments create continuous, new rhythms. Again, working within the boxes really helps your mind think about design.

Chapter 4
Costume with Character

This chapter is very special in that friends/fellow professionals from the feature and television animation industries along with video game designers have contributed character designs based on photos that I supplied them with of costumed models!

This gives you the opportunity to see the variety of opinions that can come from reality. Their visions vary in depth, color, tools, textures, and ideas. They each answer the question "Why" differently. I hope this shows you how vast and personal your choices can be. Let's get started!

Costume adds another great level to the character you are drawing. Shapes, colors, textures, patterns, and more lead to opinions and a new world of choices and experiences for you the artist

Imagine that the marks you make can help a viewer understand what something feels like to the touch. If you see a feather, your past experiences tell you what it feels like as a fellow human. As the artist and human yourself, you can visually inform someone of what something FEELS like by SHOWING it to them. The beginning of this process, though, is your attention to texture.

When it comes to texture feeding character, what does it say if a woman is wearing a black leather jacket with a studded black shirt or wearing a soft pink, high turtleneck, and cashmere sweater. Your mind immediately conjures images and opinions.

Do not ignore these instincts when drawing on location or drawing a costumed model. Let them feed your design process. This process in turn will feed you on the job, creating characters with rich ideas about the clothes they wear.

Clothing can also inform us of a time period. What are the shapes of the clothes and why? What are the colors of a particular era? What was society's disposition during the different periods?

Occupation determines costume. Is the uniform that of a fast food employee, a gladiator, or a rock star? Perhaps the character is a super hero!

Culture is another definer of costume. Are the clothes French, German, or Spanish? As you can see, if you start combining these ideas, you can obtain a very specific character of an individual with the costume. How do the characters feel about the clothes they wear? Are they forced to wear them? Are they by personal choice? Do their clothes make them feel proud?

"Why" is the most important question to answer as you create. Why do I think this way about these clothes? Why does the character wear these clothes? Why does this pose with these clothes give me this story? Why are these fabrics the colors that they are? Why, why, why!

Every person has defined his or her own persona. This is a representation of his or her internal character. Enjoy the quest to discover what is affecting you, how it affects you, and why! "Why" will help you form opinions.

> Exaggeration, the inseparable companion to greatness.
> Voltaire

In this chapter, there are three different scenarios within which the art was created.

1. Drawing from life, a real costumed model. All decisions were made on the spot.
2. A drawing based on a drawing of a model from life or photo.
3. Drawing from a photo of the model.

> When people ask me to characterize my style, I always say I am an escape artist. Style should be like a marriage: you only agree to it if it's irresistible. I'm more interested in character than style. Character comes out of the work. Style is applied or imposed on the work. Style can be a prison.
>
> Elaine de Kooning

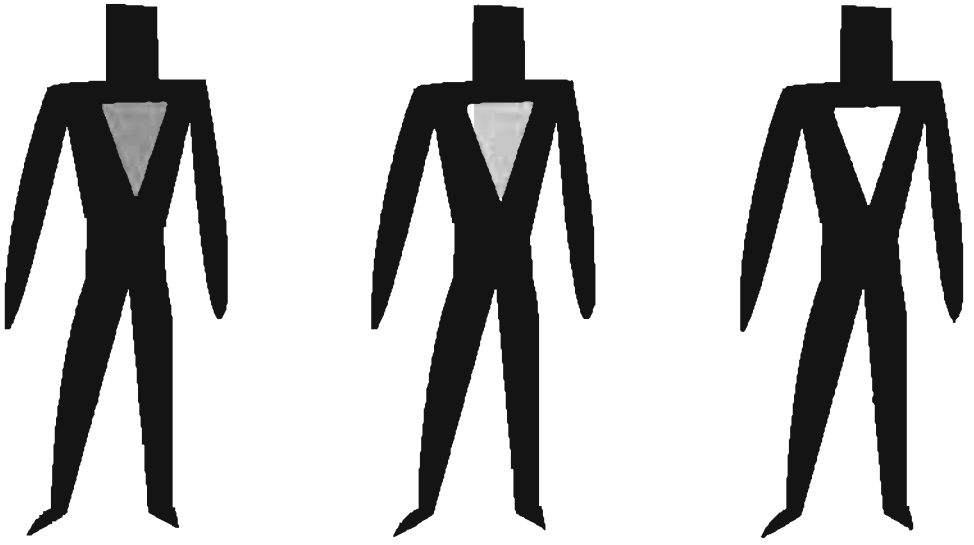
TONE OR VALUE

Getting out a soft lead or black marker and a white piece of paper is a fast way to create character designs. Silhouette is a powerful tool to see the posture of a character, and that posture can immediately give the viewer a quick read of the character. Is the character standing with his chest pushed out? Is he bent over with his hands in his face? Either silhouette describes a clear sense of character

I was extremely fortunate in having Will Eisner as an instructor in my senior year of art school. He used to discuss how important the clarity of silhouette was for character and story. In his book, *Comics and Sequential Art*, he describes this anatomy of expression by showing the silhouette of a basic pose, like resting your head in your head, under different circumstances. This pose represents different ideas when shown as a response to multiple scenarios. These silhouettes show extremes of human emotion. The open posture on the left and closed posture on the right conjure emotional concepts for us.

Then, when I went on to work at Disney Animation, the idea of clear silhouette was imposed upon me again! From one pose to the next, the clear storytelling of the character comes across in the silhouette. When a character is holding an object, you will see at Disney how the character places it outside the shape of the body to clearly present the object. Once you understand the rule, it becomes blatantly obvious when it is utilized.

Once you have figured out your silhouette, think about values. A simple rule to know is that the higher contrast an area has the more attention it brings to itself. Where is the most important part of the figure visually? Is it the face? Then design with the highest tonal contrast near the face. Is it an emblem on a hero's chest? Then put the contrast there.



This is a real simple example of tonal design. The gray triangle on the left is 50% black, the middle is 25%, and the right is pure white. See how each of them relates to the black shape of the figure. The clearest triangle shape is the white one because it creates the most contrast with the black figure. You can do what you want with tonal contrast. You may want to be subtler for character reasons. Then you could go with the 50% contrast.

Another quick read on character along with posture is facial expression. We, as humans, are extremely sensitive to each other's expressions. The slightest change in the corner of the mouth or raise of an eyebrow can suggest an entirely different thought and emotion. Eyes as the windows of ours souls lead to the close-up in all story genres, be it films, television, or video games.

Between the understanding of body language and the subtle sophistication of facial expression, you can come up with a limitless amount of characters and stories. Then, imagine dressing them up with clothes that represent them internally! Let's go to the last step on design, color.

COLOR THEORY

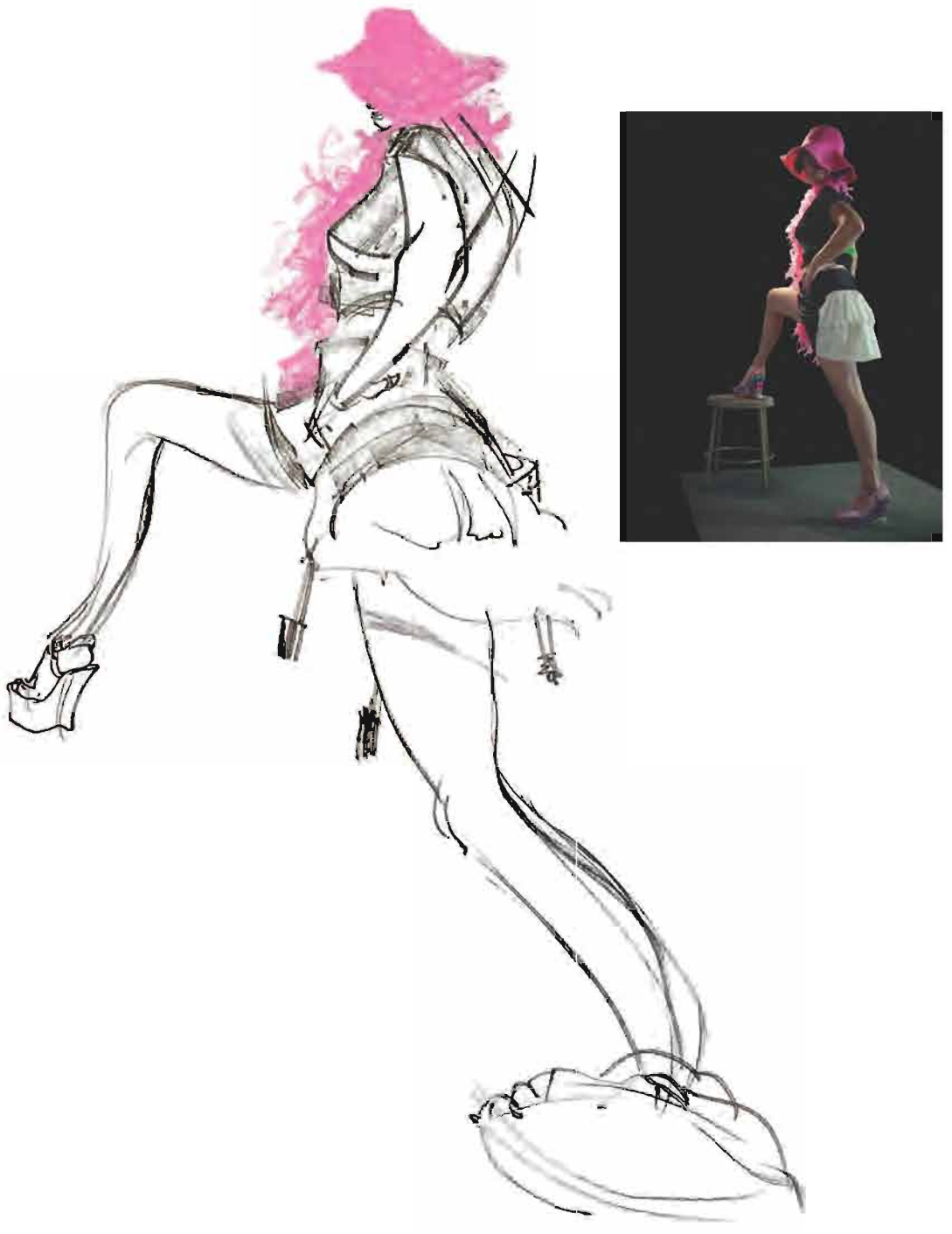
I am by far, no master of color but I will try my best here to tell you what I know about how it relates to character design. Here goes nothing.

Color's importance relative to character design was brought to my attention while I worked at Disney. They discussed the character design of Worthington Foulfellow, the fox with hat and cape in *Pinocchio*. What really stuck out in my mind was their point on the color selection of his cape. The exterior was blue and the interior was red. This color combination personifies the character. He acted friendly (blue) but was internally evil (red). I thought that was damn clever. Below I have written a quick list of some color definitions relative to character.

1. Red — anger, evil, love, hatred, blood, hot, active, emotional
2. Orange — warm, danger
3. Yellow — excited, happy, light,
4. Green — organic, rich, digital, gross, sickly, money
5. Blue — friendly, sad, diffused, calm
6. Indigo — royal
7. Black — evil, fear, cool, empty
8. White — heroism, holy, cleanliness

This list is not written in stone. Look at the movie *The Matrix*. All of the heroes are dressed in black. There are many varieties of the colors described in the list above.

You should know basic color theory — primaries, secondary, and tertiary colors. Then, know how to use analogous or complementary color harmonization. From my own experience, it is better to start off monochromatic and slowly lead into more complex color palettes than to use all colors. Former painting instructors and friends have agreed with this process. Start with primaries and know how to mix. Don't work in too many saturated colors. Use the colors to make a statement. Know what you are after and trying to say.



Here I feel I was most successful in capturing the feel of the feather boa and the power of Nicole Strafaci's pose. See how I handled her upper body with shape as my approach. The powerful curve of her back against the fluid right leg is a nice contrast of ideas.

ERIN LEONG

This particular photo was chosen because of its interesting pose and variety of garment. I decided to take a fashion illustrative approach and start by thinning out the character and elongating her neck, arms, torso, and legs. It was intentional to not copy the pose exactly; instead I wanted to focus on the silhouette for readability. This resulted in pulling the front arm back and pushing out the back leg. I was pleased with the initial colors such as the pink and purple, and wanted a color that would help push those colors forward. Since yellow is complementary of purple, I tried to work that into the background and create a subtle color that would still contrast with the character.

TEDDY NEWTON

I start with a colorful magazine. When I come across a good texture with a lot of surface area, I cut away. Then, I'll try and reinterpret what those textures are. For instance, I'll turn lips into hair, or I'll turn a wrinkled napkin into a hardened face. It's a great starting point before I add the rest of the pieces. It's sort of like visual improvisation. I do not plan a piece with an under drawing. I simply let the pages in the magazine surprise me, then I act off that.

When I received this photo of the woman in the pink hat, I first thought it was a man in drag. Only later did I find out that this person was "all woman." So my use of the winter forest for the legs and arms was simply to exaggerate the ideas of hairy scratchy skin that would tip you off that this was really a man underneath sexy womanly shapes.

Look at the angularity of the boots in comparison to the soft curves of the legs. You can see that I had a clear thought about making the neckline of the shirt as an obvious shape. I enlarged the shape of the hat to further frame out the character's face.

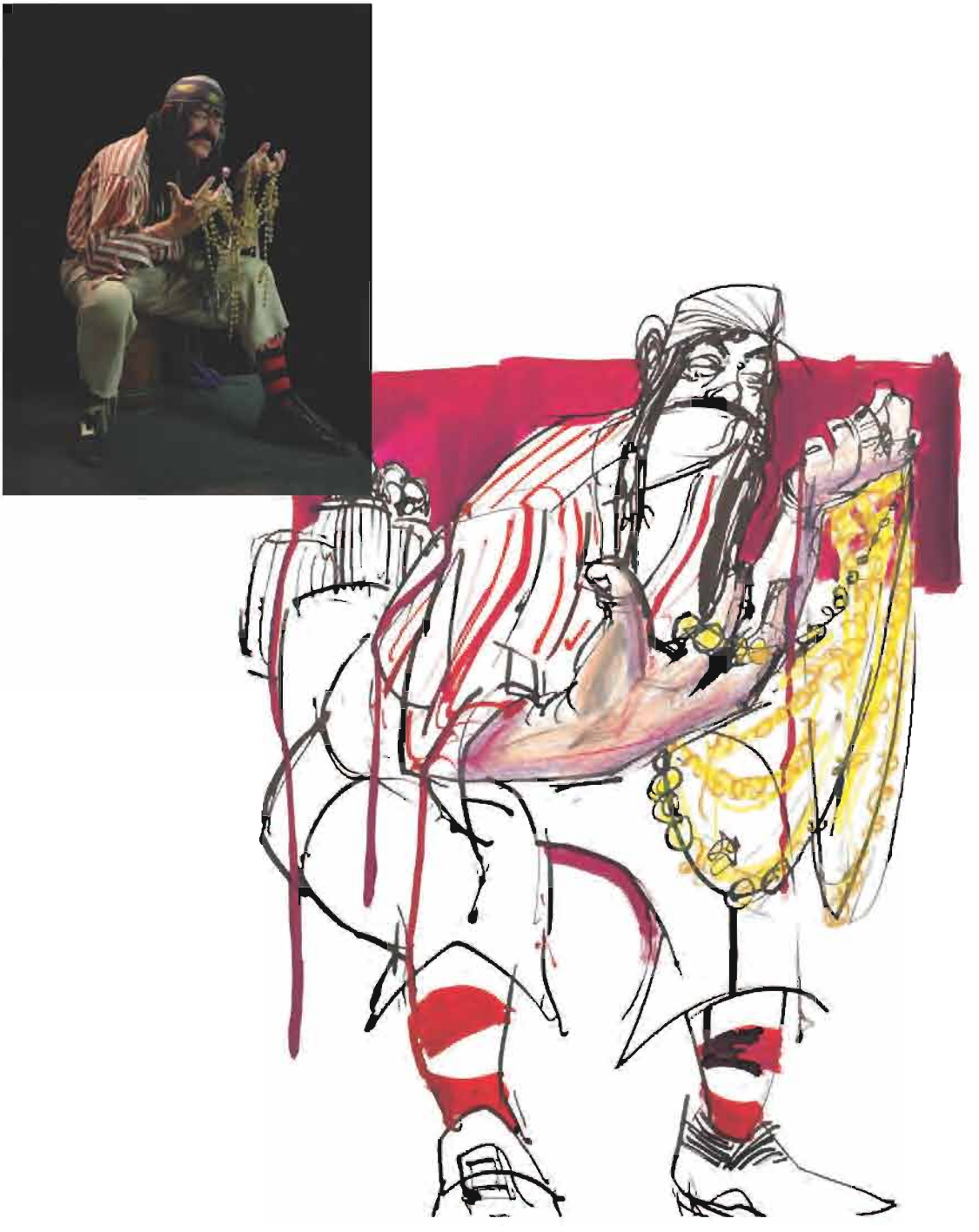
DEANNA MARSIGLIESE

In my opinion, character designing is purely intuitive; knowing what shapes, colors, and lines will best depict your character's personality. My approach is to doodle without direction until I've experimented with several different ideas. In the case of this design, I began by drawing her as a tall, thin, model-like woman. Although she seemed appealing, the character did not exude enough personality. As I continued to play with different proportions, I discovered that designing her as a heavier woman allowed me to have more fun with the shapes — and it was much funnier! When designing, I try to incorporate straights, curves, bold blocks of color, interesting shapes, textures, and fun patterns. Never be afraid to try something unique. For this design, I've chosen to ignore the transparent nature of the blouse, keeping it as a

solid, simplified black shape. I've used line work to suggest stylized ruffles in the fabric, as well as texture in the hair and eyelashes. I've also had a bit of fun using "dotted patterns" to suggest the strap of her purse and the embellishments on her cowboy boots. When drawing the final version of a design, I prefer to use clean, seamless line work.

In the initial stages, however, I try to be as loose as possible, using long, fluid lines. I like to imagine a character as a living, breathing individual. This helps me to evaluate whether or not the design is believable. Most important, have fun! Never be afraid of a bad drawing or constructive criticism. It's all part of the process.

The mob was on my mind in these images. The cigar, loud Hawaiian shirt, and the trunk brought to mind a murder whose remnants were hidden in the trunk. Foul play was at work as I illustrated this story. Always feel comfortable playing with media. This was done with Dr. Martin's dyes, a pen, and a marker.



Story behind the character was a key element here. The facial expression and pose tell us how much the gold means to the pirate. Look at his gaze and see his love for the gold. John Tucker, the model, did a great job of acting out this moment.

This design was inspired from the photograph and my drawing done from life. I drew the character with lead and then painted it rapidly in Photoshop. Notice the curve that I injected into the barrel to accentuate the weight and direction of the pirate's body. I made the background green to pop the red out in the scarf and shirt. I then brought focus to the main story by designing the yellow circle.

Here is another exploration from the same pirate image. I decided to go more abstract. I loved the idea of the worn shirt and highlighted that feature by giving it a lot of real estate in the image. Then, I played up the idea of the pirate's tools of the trade — his sword and gun. To play off of the shape of the shirt, I created skinny black legs to add some humor to the design. This was all designed with flatness in mind. See how the shapes relate to one another. Look at the difference in size between the two hands. Notice his mischievous expression. Color is all analogous and accentuated with the black.

STEPHEN SILVER

My goal when I'm drawing from life or drawing from photographs is first and foremost to push it. I do not want to just copy what is in front of me, mainly because I feel I lose the life and energy of the pose. I also learn more that way. The first step in the process is getting some lines down on the paper, the gesture. The next phase is to tighten that drawing up slightly and make it a little clearer to see if it is working for me. The third phase is cleaning it up. This one was cleaned in Alias Sketchbook Pro. The most important aspect of the whole process is to make sure you don't just trace your previous drawings. That tends to take out all the life. The final phase was coloring it in Painter.

DEAN YEAGLE

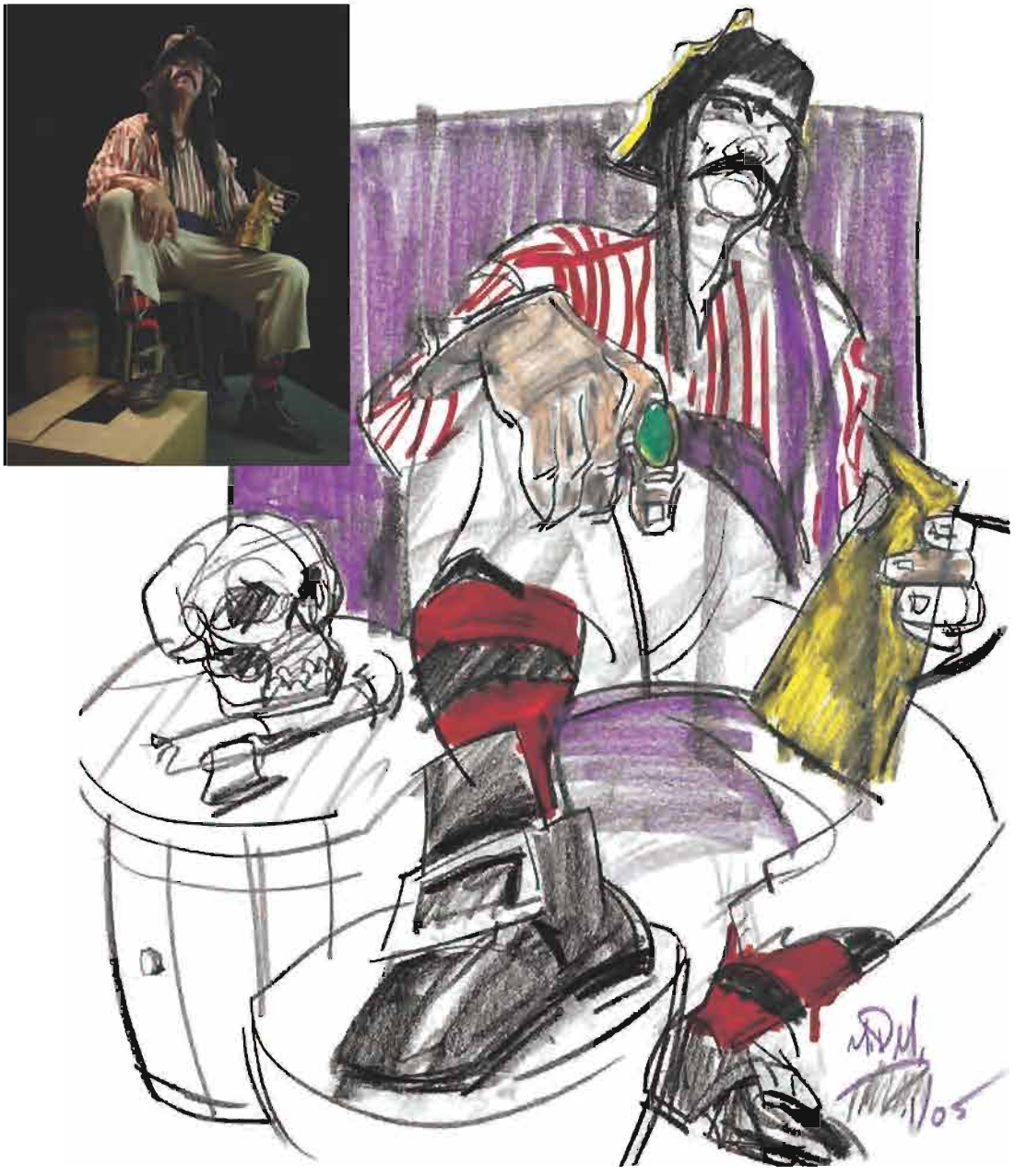
I rarely work out a character directly from a model, but I will often use a person or pose that I've seen before in real life. There are a surprising number of people walking around who, with a little tweaking, can be turned into pirates. Sometimes it's just an expression or a pose that suggests a type. In this case, since the model is already a character, fully costumed at that, it's just a matter of twisting that image into cartoon form – exaggerating the various pirate-like attributes. A bigger, more broken nose, scrawnier arms, more of a paunch, a squint (or closing one eye entirely – it was good enough for another cartoon sailor), and perhaps removing one of his legs below the knee and replacing it with a leg from a coffee table. Exaggerating the pose, and changing whatever seems to work against the character you're trying to create. The angle of the head, or making an open hand into a fist, is important.

And going a little further with each successive drawing helps to work out whatever you've held back, or kept needlessly close to the original model. Very early on in the process, I'm not looking at the model anymore at all. I'm working from what I've gotten from that first, more "realistic" drawing. It's always good to go back again and look, in case you've left behind an important bit of information that you can get from the model; once you've got the character in mind, it's best to give your imagination free reign. When I'm near to the character I want, I'll try the face in different positions and expressions to see if it's working and if the personality is coming together. I also want to see if I've got an original looking character and not one that I have already drawn before. And then, of course, it never hurts to add a parrot.

Here is my oldest daughter, Makenna, as a mermaid. This started as a pencil design on animation paper. I gave her a long, fluid body and used colors right from the photo to paint with in Photoshop. The image is also about how something as simple as the seashell brings the mermaid happiness.

STEPHANIE LABERIS

In the case of the mermaid, I wanted to illustrate a more energetic moment than the original pose depicted. Because the subject was slightly older than the upcoming butterfly girl, I aged her up a little further and I thought of illustrating that awkward phase where the boys start to take notice but still in a very innocent way. I chose very fluid and thin shapes to emphasize both her weightlessness underwater and the physical awkwardness of a pre-pubescent girl. I also left a few of her younger physical qualities intact, such as the button nose and "outie" belly button while leaving more of the swooping curves intact, trying to balance qualities of childhood with the onset of impending womanhood. Once again, I wanted the character to have a focal point, so the smooching fish was a must.



Here the pirate is sitting back enjoying a beverage with his pistol at his side. I played with the size of his hand and foot. I also compressed his upper body. I felt as though I lost his character so I proceeded to take another shot.

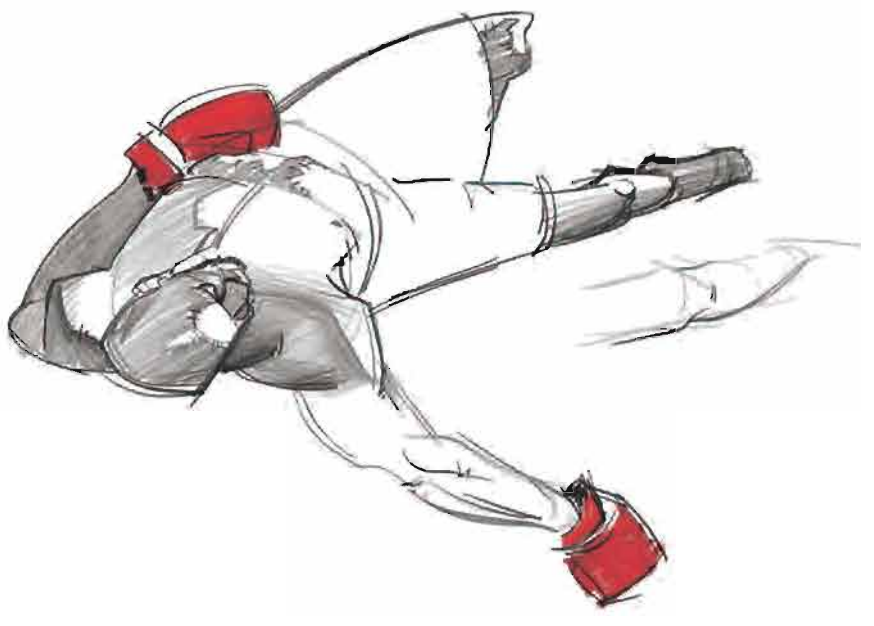
This drawing was done with black ink right from the inkbottle dropper. What I like about my second version is that I got the attitude that I wanted. The tilted head gives the character a feeling of confidence, arrogance, and achievement. He also feels like a wet rat because of the fluid drippy lines. See how the harder lines of the cup contrast his lines.

JOHN NEVAREZ

As I began the sketch, I first just visualized simple shapes using the shape tool in Photoshop. Once I blocked out basic proportion of the head and body, I did another pass blocking out volume in a graphic form. My third pass was using the pastel brush and creating a quick texture. In the end, I would squiggle in lines here and there for effect. The intent was to do a very quick caricature, not necessarily getting the likeness, but rather the essence of his personality. This exercise took about 15 minutes to complete.

JOHN NEVAREZ

As for the pencil drawing, I treated it as quick gestural exercise. I first found the forms and then committed to volumes with tone using the flat of my pencil.



This pass was my first study of the fallen boxer. Simple shapes led to design and shading.

The boxer lays down for the ten count in the last round. Again, this was created from abstract shapes. Story comes into the drawing. Thinking about the referee giving the boxer the ten count or the *Rocky* theme music are sounds I thought of while creating this image.

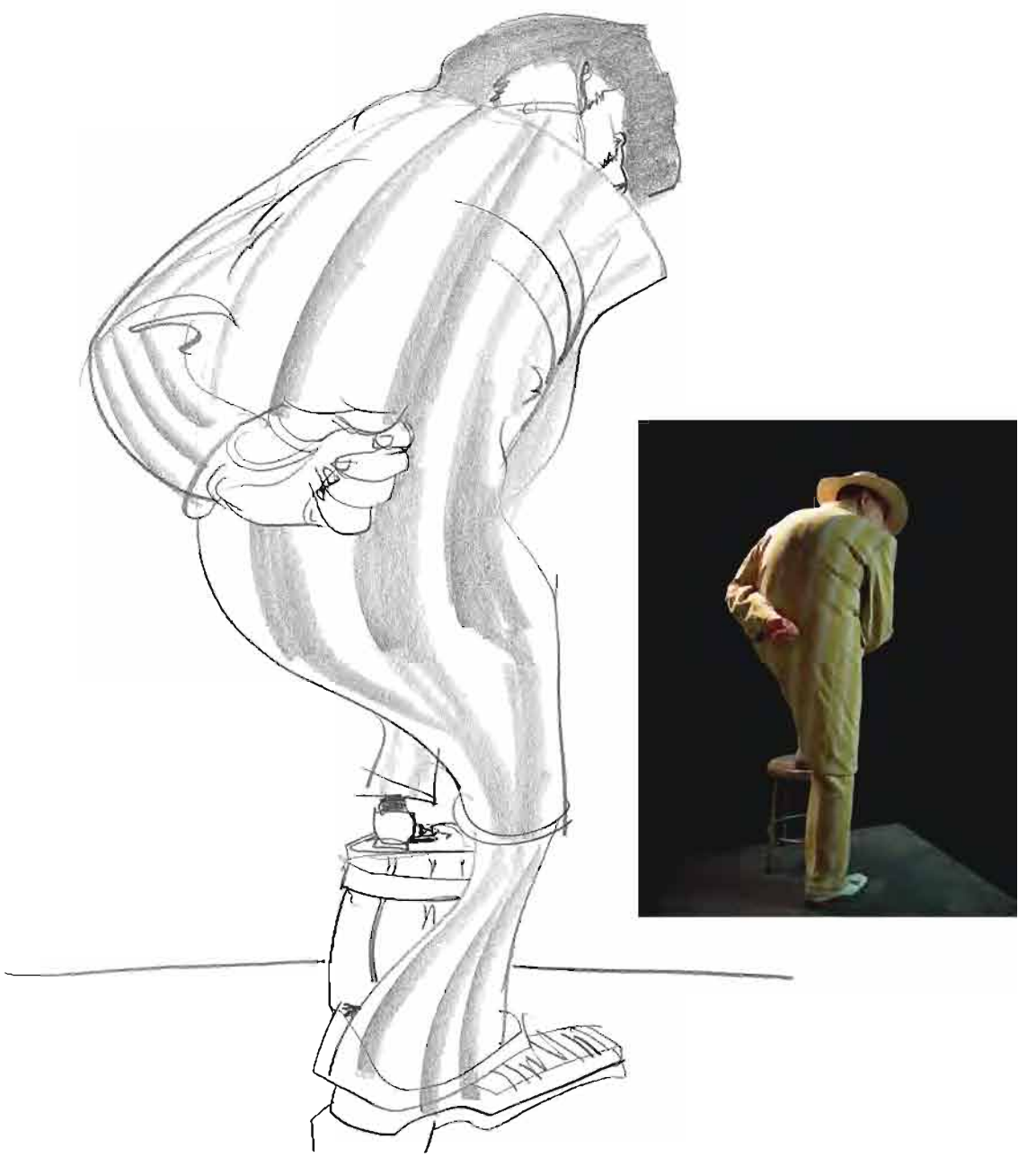
Victorious he stands, after having knocked out his opponent with seconds to spare. I purposely chose the low angle or worm's eye to create a powerful portrayal of this pose. When you are drawing a model, and you have story in mind, pick the view of the model that will assist in telling the story you are after.

This design of my youngest daughter, Marin, shows her as a princess. I added the crown and slippers to push the story moment. I sized up her head shape and dress to make her feel young. Again, the story that the character exudes was the main focus. Her relationship to the slipper is the focal point.

STEPHANIE LABERIS

I used the poses in the photos as a starting point for my characters, but chose to alter them to better tell a story. In the case of the butterfly girl, I wanted her face to be visible, engage the viewer, and make her pose a little more carefree and child-like. I added the butterfly to both give her a focal point and to play off the shape of the bows on her dress. In that process I decided on a dress-up/make-believe theme for the piece and further altered her costuming to play off the shape of the butterfly with the ribbons suggesting wings and the headband resembling antennae. Finally, I sharpened a few of the curves and left the hair somewhat scrappy to insinuate a slight tomboy edge to her; I had to balance all that cute stuff out somehow!

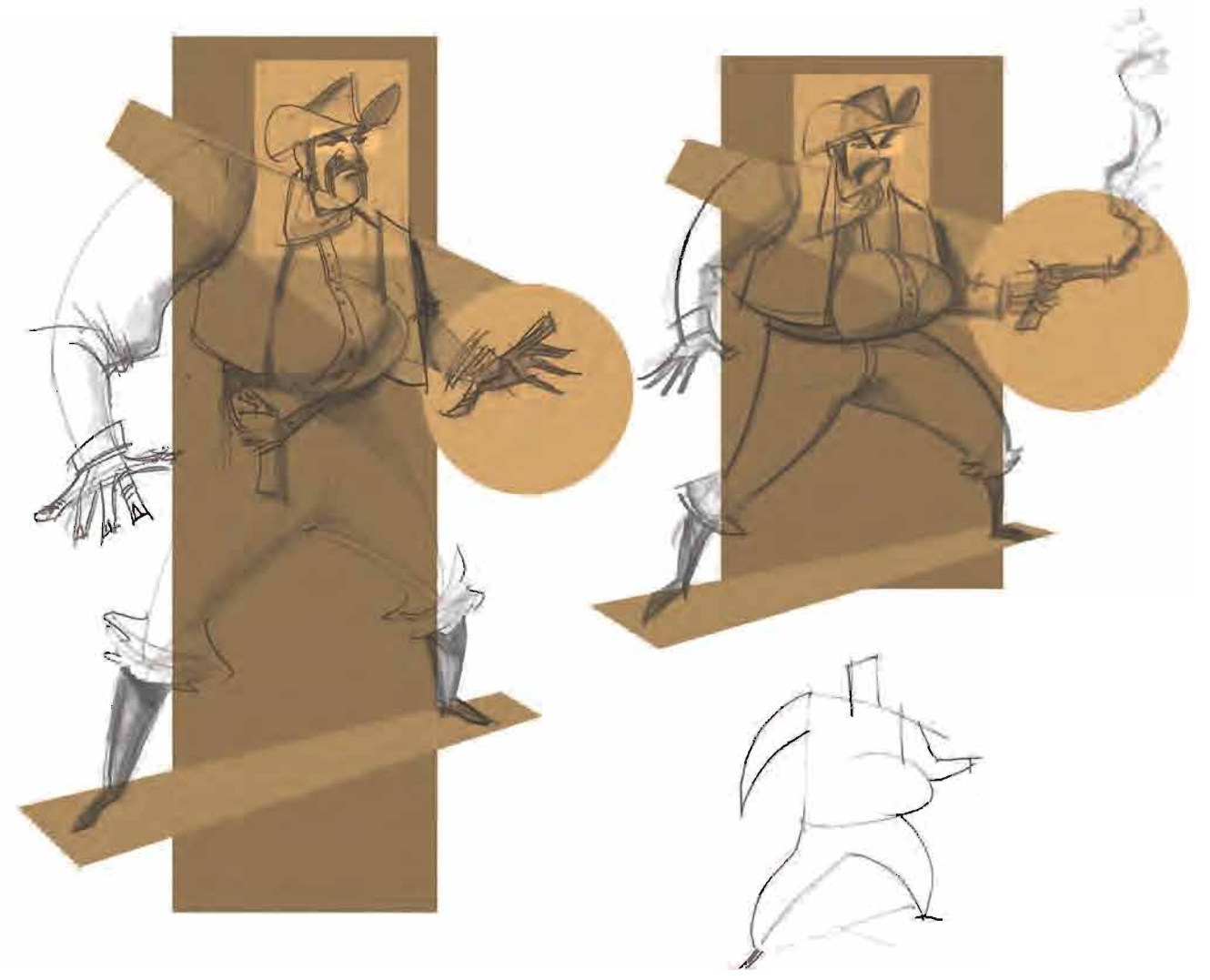
On to our gangster. The big suit with the pinstripe was a blast to draw. His huge meaty hand with the fingernails was great. Look at the flat, long foot. His expression and pose depict an air of arrogance. David Roon, the model, gave me a great deal to find interest in.



The posture of the pose was my first thought. I pushed the curvature of the gangster's back along with the size of his hand and right foot. Increasing the size of his hand assists in the exaggeration of his back by saying it is coming so close to us when his head is far away.

This cowgirl, modeled by Jennifer Fabos Patton, sits on an imagined barrel of hay. See the shape of the hat and the vest. The forceful shape is also in the belt. I like the texture of the denim shorts implied by the line in the wrinkles. The look on her face and body language are key elements here.

John Tucker poses here as a cowboy. Great costume, great facial expression, and great pose make it easy to come up with a fun design. One of the changes I made was in the color of his handkerchief and value of his hat. Why? Well, most of his costume is yellow, so I went with the complementary color right near the face to draw attention to it. Then I did that again by making the hat dark in contrast to the value of the face. For fun, I put some cacti silhouettes in the blue background by his face.



Here is our cowboy again but broken down into his most abstract shapes. I did these drawings in response to other ideas I had after the experience of the first design. I wanted to simplify and push this further. Let's describe what these shapes mean. Let's start with the long, dark vertical shape. This is the overall shape and proportion of my idea. Then, you can see the angle of the shoulders and how they lean down toward the hand, which is in clear silhouette. The angle of the feet shows the sense of depth the figure occupies through the angle and size relationship found between them. I then created a circle shape for the focus placed on the hand.

MARC PERRY

The best way I could explain the thought process that goes into doing most of my designs is for me. I guess you might say I think in a more cartoony way. I think more in shapes; different or unusual shapes. Then it's feeling an attitude within the character or one I want to create and then trying to exaggerate, simplify, and stylize it. It could be something you feel in your body or see in your head. As you draw hopefully that voice in your head says, "that feels like what I was thinking about." If not, do it again, again, and again, just have fun. The other process, as simple as it may sound, depending on the style of the character, if it feels good, looks funny, and makes you laugh then hopefully it will affect others in the same way.

Western six-shooter pose was fun in playing with different shape ideas and playing up the pose keeping things simple, cartoony, and clear. I wanted only to use what was necessary for the character.

RAGNAR

My initial intent was to generally keep with the ninja's theme in the overall design, but decided I wanted her to hold something heavier and with more volume. This gives her the presence of being physically stronger. I elongated the limbs. This is something I almost always do, certainly with female characters. I find it gives me more to work with and helps with lines of action.

I opened up her eyes a bit to give her a bit of aggression and defiance in her expression. I also used her hand to support the extra weight of the gun by placing it on her thigh. This also helps to close the visual loop that was left open in the model's pose.

I kept her costume sparse but changed the shapes and moved the lines around some. I often use nude models and clothe them during the design process. I find that starting with a blank canvas helps avoid having preconceived ideas about where to take the design.

In this case I felt that the swing of the pose would hold up to a very heavy costume such as armor. What I went after from this photo was the attitude of the character. She struck me with a tough cockiness. Her head thrown back along with the strong thrust into her right hip create this impression. I pushed the length of her legs and wrapped the dragon tattoo around one of them. I also made the closer leg wider to widen her stance. To the left are some other designs for her face.

PHIL RYNDA

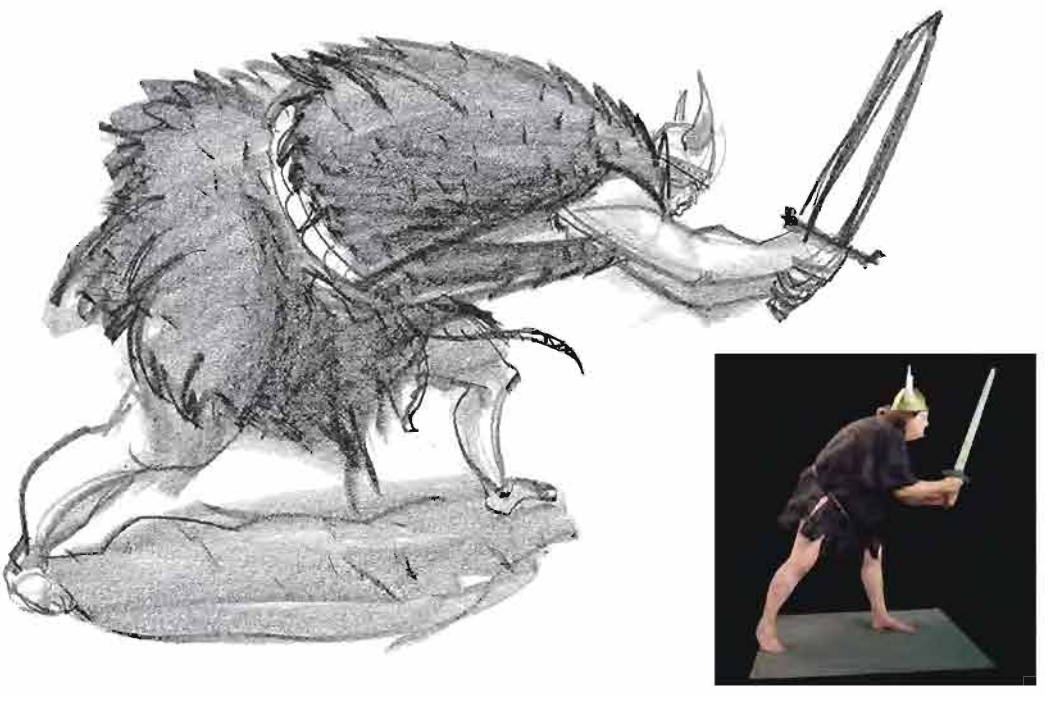
I find that drawing "with" character can be the most important thing about drawing "a" character, especially early in the development of a design. For me, it's all about interest. What makes me interested in this character? What's my artistic opinion of this character? When drawing from life or photo reference, your personal opinion of

what you're looking at is of extreme importance. It's very easy to become a slave to your reference and all you will find yourself doing is attempting to copy your source material. You have to allow the reference to spark some interest in your heart and then you have to run with your gut and don't stop. Confidence is key, but it comes at a price. Pure confidence and no fundamentals won't get you very far. You have to learn and practice observational drawing as well as drawing characters from the ground up with solid underlying forms and structure. With a solid grasp of the fundamentals, when you begin to impose your opinions on a drawing they will be grounded and will begin take shape as one clear idea.

PHIL RYNDA

For me, this type of drawing is how I start almost every design I do. I try to work loose and quick. The purpose of these drawings is to learn something. You're not shooting for a final drawing, but instead a drawing that will inform what might be the final. My drawings included in this book were drawn extremely quickly. I only allowed myself to take a few minutes to get the drawing down on paper. This way, if I was going to move forward with a final design, I can see what my initial opinion of the character was. For me, this is the purest way to draw and create.

My design is off of a real model session so you'll notice that the sword is in a different location than the photo. It is good to be aware of how that slight change in position says something different about this character. In the photo, he seems tougher, more stoic. When it comes to shape, I pushed a long vertical rectangle on him to make him feel strong and proud. The sword is the only object that really breaks that parameter and tells us he is sensitive as a ruler.



Mike Schmidt plays an attacking barbarian. Many ideas are happening here. There is the forceful shape with the straight bottom and curved top. The reverse action is found in the arm. The size comparison of his body to his head and the texture of the furry costume were all ideas in this experience.

TEDDY NEWTON

I chose flat pink for the skin because I thought it looked the most naked against the gray costuming. As far as the helmet, I figured that bricks were a good description of what a hard head this character could be.

I tried bringing high energy to this story. The drawing is angular in nature but still rhythmic. Notice the shape of the neck hole, the broadness of the shoulders, and the time it took to draw this. It took three minutes and much was accomplished in that short period of time.

Taking first impressions a step further, I pushed the forces of the pose and changed the direction of the sword. I figured out a design to his face that expressed the way I thought he would feel.

The top row of faces takes the face from the prior design and plays with different facial expressions. The bottom row displays the face morphed to different head shapes. I drew the silhouettes of the heads underneath the designs for your convenience.

PATRICK MORGAN

When I draw a character from a photograph, I try not to copy it, but rather use the photo as reference. I'll usually start by getting the pose down as simply as possible with a bunch of quick rough sketches. I try to push the proportions around a bit making sure the pose has a nice flow to it. Once I'm happy with the pose, I either add or eliminate the details needed for the piece. I then put the photo away so I don't get caught up with "copying" the photo. I then start overlaying drawing after drawing until I am satisfied with the final art.

I scan the final drawing into Photoshop for the color process. I like using textured paper for my work. Sometimes I'll draw on brown paper, and other times like this piece, on white paper. I have scanned a blank piece of colored textured paper, shifted the color of the paper to the desired hue, and overlaid my drawing on a layer above. The character art layer is set to multiply in order to see the textured paper

through the art. On separate layers also set to multiply, I start to drop flat color over the top of the character. Once I am happy with the color choices I've made, I then merge the color and the drawing to one layer, and set that layer to multiply, which again enables the textured paper behind the art to show through and merge the art and paper together. Once merged I then use the dodge and burn tools to add highlights, and shadows to punch up the piece. The rendering on the drawing itself also contributes to the shadows and highlights. Hope that makes sense. Enjoy!

MARC PERRY

Gun Girl. I loved the costume but wanted to give her a more silhouetted and playful pose. I wanted to try different ideas. I liked pushing the shapes on most of these to play up the almost unrealistic cartooniness of them.

TEDDY NEWTON

This was fun to create. I found some images of wet belt buckles on black backgrounds. This was like killing two birds with one stone. The buckles felt like bondage, and the wetness felt like slick rubber; perfect for this futuristic sexpot.

JAKE KAZDAL

I started with a quick sketch with a brush I made in Photoshop similar in grain and texture to a Prismacolor pencil. I just loosely sketched the character, trying to "force" every bit that I could to accentuate the pose. I then clean up the basic pose and work on smaller details like the shapes of her arms and little bits like the bellybutton, etc.

The greatest thing about working digitally is the ability to take your sketch and further push it once you have your main details worked out. I gave her longer legs and pushed her torso out to the right even farther, giving her more weight and drama. The cleaned up sketch is now ready to apply paint to. First I block in the background, then on separate layers I apply a "block-out" pass of skin, black, and hair. Everything I do going forward will use one of these three layers as their base. Each of these three main layers has preserve transparency on it, and when I decide to add, for example, shading to the skin layer I do it on a new layer using the "use previous layer to create clipping mask" option that comes up when creating a new layer. Basically, what this means is I can paint quick and dirty on this new layer and yet I will never have to clean up or stay inside the lines.

Once these main layers are established I switch into Corel Painter and use a smeary oil brush to simulate large brush strokes, especially on her dress and hair. Once this is done I switch back to Photoshop where I am more comfortable with adjusting finer details. With a large generic brush I paint in her skin tones, shading, the gun, and a bit of photoscrap dropped on for her tattoos. While I would have liked to take the time to noodle and design the tattoos myself, my time budget was tight so I was able to get an effective look quickly using whatever resources available. Such is the life of a production concept artist!

When Mike Schmidt dresses in this Roman-like costume, he looks innocent and almost humorous to me. It changes the way I think and draw him. I love the expression on the face, the little head, and the flat shape of the chalice he holds.

This image was about the joyousness of the character and his wine, like Bacchus. The pose itself had a clear silhouette, but I tried to push the concept by enlarging the wine glass in the negative space between his head and extended hand. I also curved his back to make him more jovial instead of proud.

MARC PERRY

Looking at the happy toasting Roman, I liked the pose a lot but wanted to play up the shape different ways and push the playfulness I thought the character should have, again thinking cartoony and humorous.

GRISELDA SASTRAWINITA

I start drawing first. I brainstorm and generate some ideas. I usually try to make sure that they are different from one another to varying degrees. Then when I have settled on a concept that I feel is the one that I want, I refine the concept even further. I think of the composition and positive and negative space as they pertain to the dimensions of the page. Then, I do color comps to explore different color schemes. I do these to try and get some different ideas for color. I try to keep these simple. When I have decided on a final color scheme, I proceed to do the final painting. I paint in order — back to front, dark to light, and dull to bright.

Ah, a matador! This image from *The Drawing Club of Mark Russo* is fantastic! I love the contrast of large flat colors to the ornate pattern found on the shoulder. Mark's face and neck felt like one idea to me, so I shaped it out as such.

Here is a more humorous approach to the matador. The thin legs and pose push the idea of him being tired of playing matador. One of the main ideas I pulled from my prior interpretation was the neck and head relationship.

So here is another version of the matador. In this one, I went after his long thin neck and oval-shaped head again but pushed the abstraction a step further. I shortened up his torso and thinned down his legs. This type of style is tricky because your choice in shapes has to be clear and well chosen. It is much easier to hide behind much rendering than to put yourself out with clear-cut decisions.

TEDDY NEWTON

When I found the photo of the cloth drapes, I immediately connected this to the matador's cape. However, I thought it would be more interesting to use the drapery for the wrinkles on his angry face. To me, this is where the creativity comes in. It's more compelling to use the textures of these cutouts symbolically than literally.

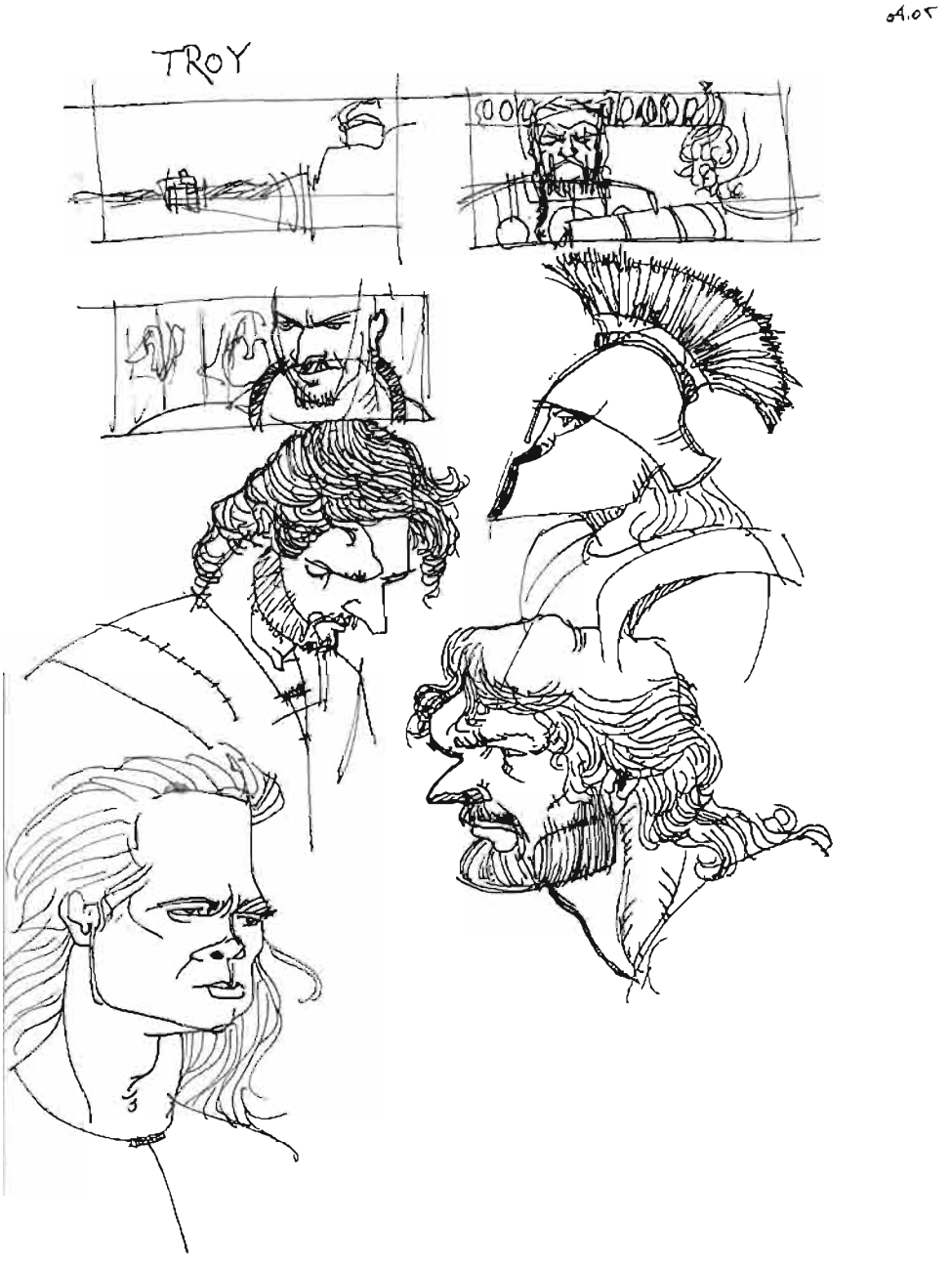
These are five minute drawings of my friend David Lockhardt. His rich costume truly assisted in feeding the character. The lush fabrics coupled with interesting poses made for an enjoyable drawing session.

CHARACTER INSPIRATION

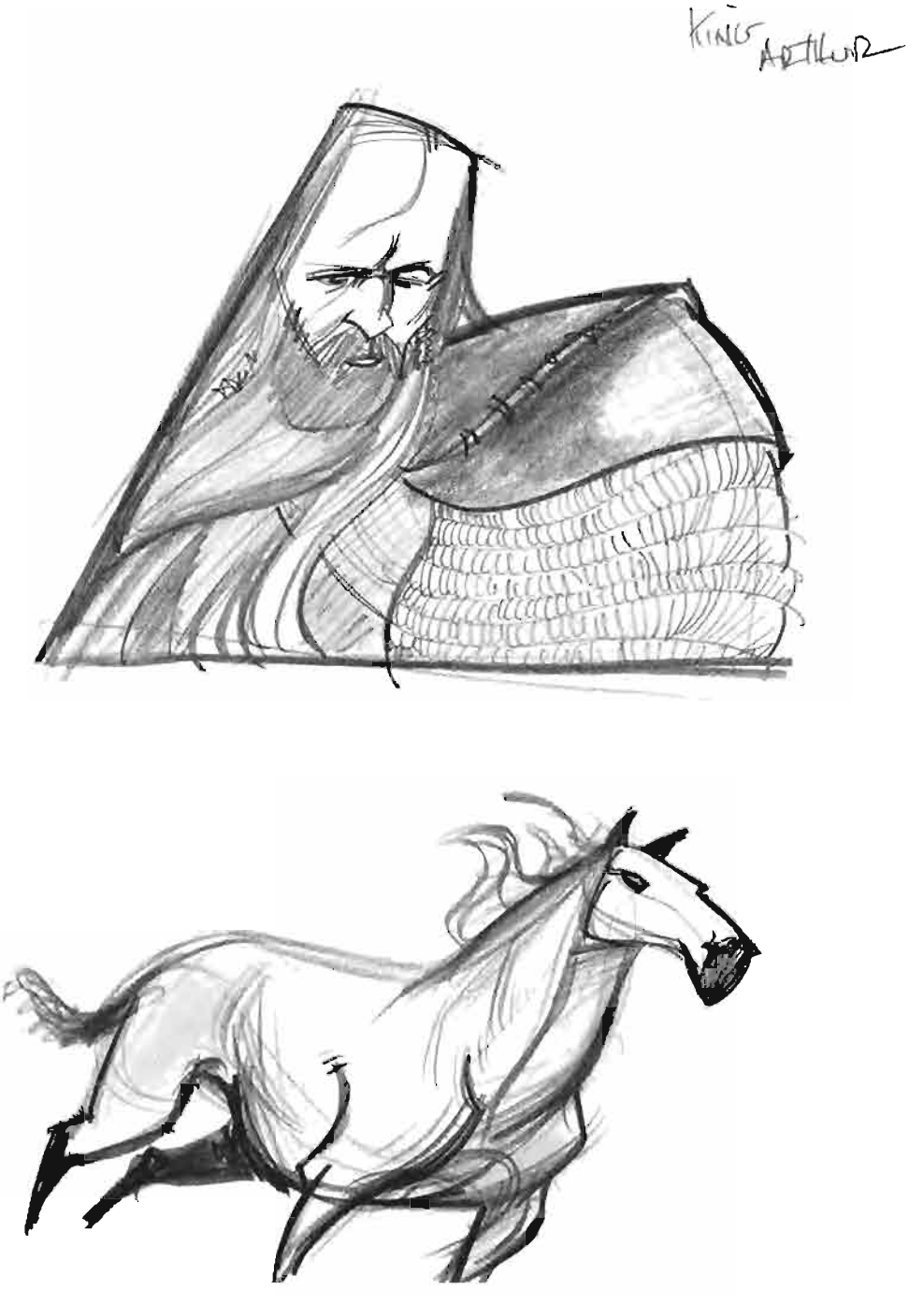
Other media are great sources for character inspiration. You can't beat the sets and costumes found in films. Millions of dollars were spent to give you a rich experience. Use drawing as your vehicle to do so. The only shortcoming here is that it is not real. It is flat and predesigned. You, on the other hand, can bring your opinion to the table and push ideas into these stunning visuals. Let them inform you.

The drawings on the left were done while watching Peter Jackson's *King Kong*. The top two were an analysis on simplifying layout through shape and tone. The top drawing was closer to the actual film shot. In the bottom study, I simplified the light shape into a triangle over the closer eye to focus us on the smaller one eye. The bottom drawings of Kong are thoughts on playing with the expression of the character through the flexibility of the jaw. The drawings on the right are from *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, and drawn differently. In the top right corner is a study of composition. The drawings below study character shapes and personalities.

More films. The top left designs are from *Troy*, the top right are from *Minority Report*, and the bottom right are from *Master and Commander*. I love the drawing of the king on the left side of the page. The actor with the long, thin head is Peter O'Toole! The length adds to his power and royalty. I pushed asymmetry into his costume, which could subtly suggest some chaos or dynamic within him. You can see how I played with Brad Pitt's profile.



Love this Brad Pitt and Eric Bana. In the top drawing of Bana, you can see the flat shape of the head and then how I worked my way back in space from the forehead to the nose and then the mouth and chin. At the top of the page are compositional studies. You can see how flat shapes are my method to analysis. The shape of the helmets was great also. *Troy* is a fun movie to draw from.



These are more film studies inspired by *King Arthur*. Again, I started with the abstract exterior shape and filled it with the reference from the film. The shape I chose related to the character's pose. DVDs are such a great technology for the sake of research. Use the vast library available to you!

IMAGINATIVE DESIGN

This part of Chapter 4 shows examples of design that are purely from imagination. Now, of course, that imagination is filled with many years of reference. Some of the images are from prior jobs; some are just doodled while my brain needed a creative escape.

I hear often from students that they don't know what to draw unless being told. Understandable. That is one of the values of school and work. If you want to create your own ideas, though, you need to be self-motivated. Writing these books is not the easiest job. Granted, I love doing it but it's not easy. What keeps me going? Well, the first thing is I have a deadline to hit with my publisher. If you are responsible to someone else, that usually makes a person more timely in the delivery. Try to be responsible to yourself or to someone else. So, a DEADLINE is key .. especially to bigger projects.

I imagine seeing the finished product and hearing feedback from students on how the book inspired and educated them! Use your imagination to foresee the future and motivate you to completion.

Give yourself a specific time to do this work. I find that the more I organize my time, the easier my life becomes. People ask me all the time how I am juggling so many different things. Time management. Believe me, I am no pro in this area, but enough so to get everything I want done . . sooner or later.

Find out what you love to draw! If just doodling, up the ante and maybe put two ideas together. For instance, I love drawing super heroes. What if I combined that with battle ships or insects?

Sometimes I just get a random thought and have the strong desire to experience illustrating that idea. I am sure you have all felt that. DO NOT LET IT PASS YOU BY! Seize the moment! Go fulfill that artistic desire.

Don't fear the page. Throw something down. I don't care if it is a smudge. Get something down and move forward

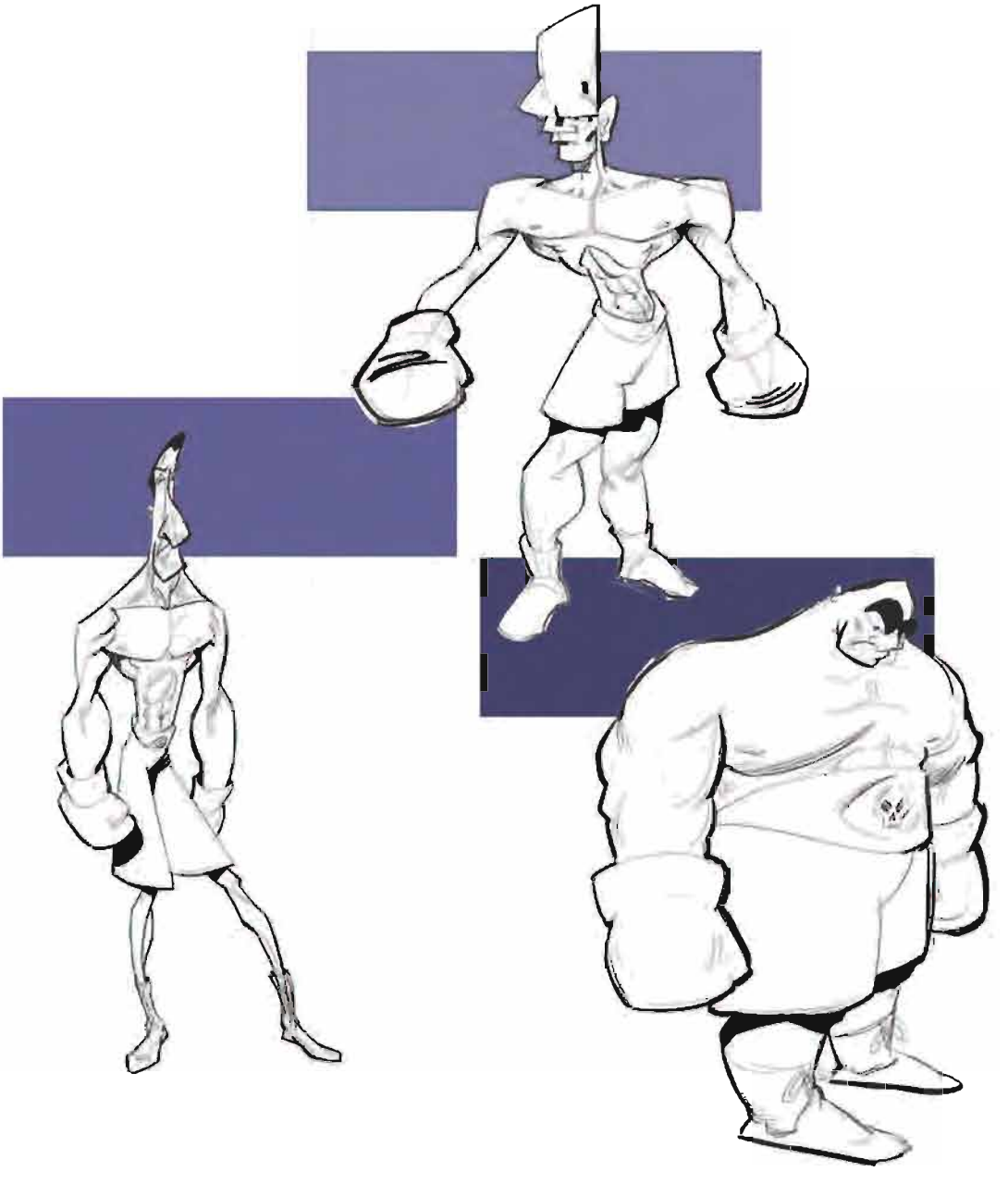
Another route to go is to just draw and see what comes out of you. Be one with the tip of the drawing utensil Follow it across the page. See what develops.

Anyway, I hope these suggestions help.

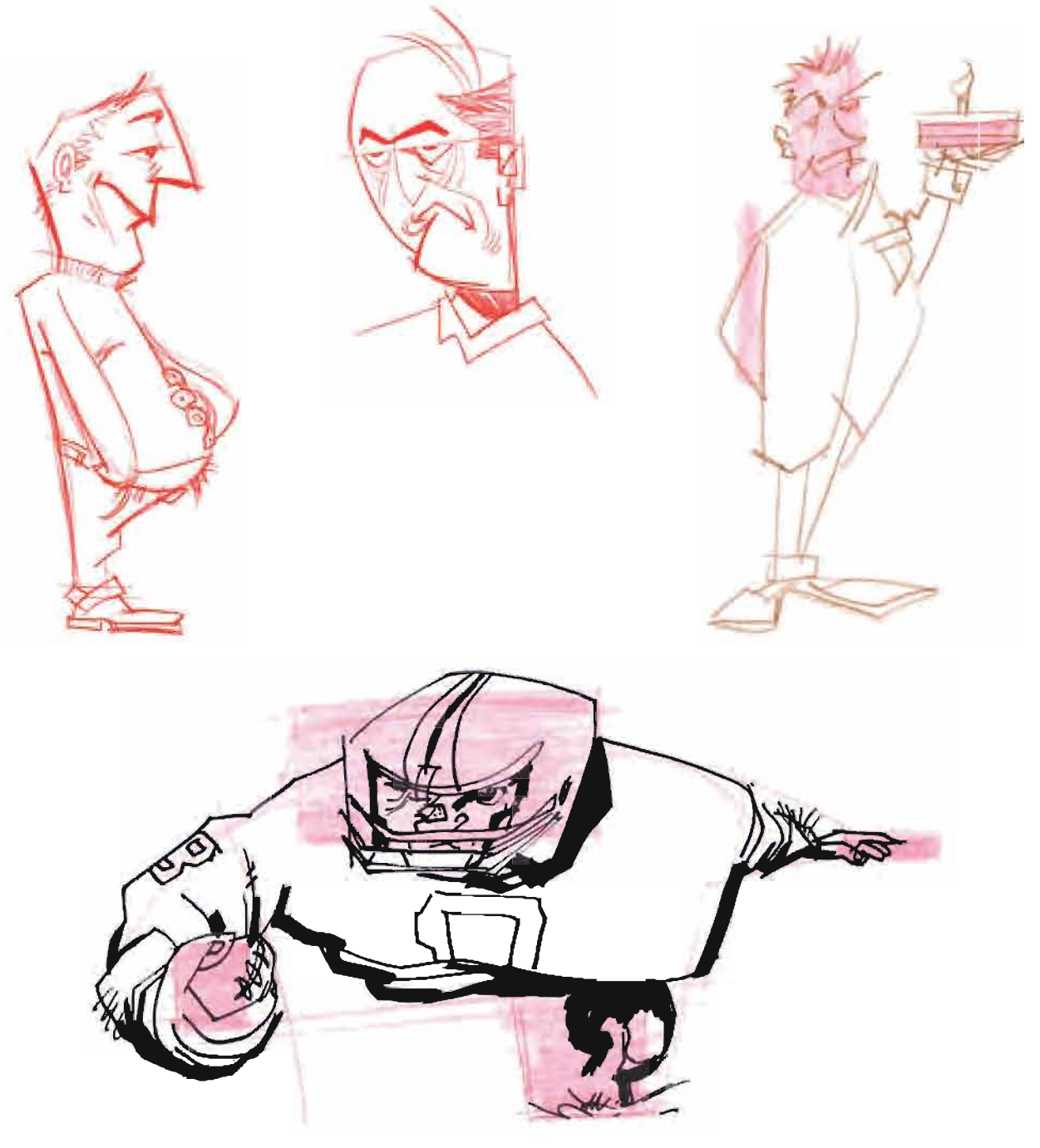
This is a typical doodle page for me. I basically drew in flat shapes to create faces and bodies. I then went in and rendered them with simple tone gradations. I love the way it worked out with the man's face on the middle left side of the page. Notice that I used shapes that were created by drawing through the head to define the back.

The fireman is a change in materials to create the charred clothes. Black Caran d'Ache crayons and whiteout brought this story moment together. This illustration occurred because of a fire in Burbank that I saw right from the Disney lot. I remember coming out of one of the buildings and wondering what was falling from the sky. It was ash! As I turned the corner, I saw the twenty-foot high flames just across the freeway.

The man on the left was done as a reaction to the sophisticated simplicity from television animation. I am defining flat shapes and filling them with form. The woman was based on the thought of just creating rhythm and fitting a body to it. The hair silhouettes the face in this design.

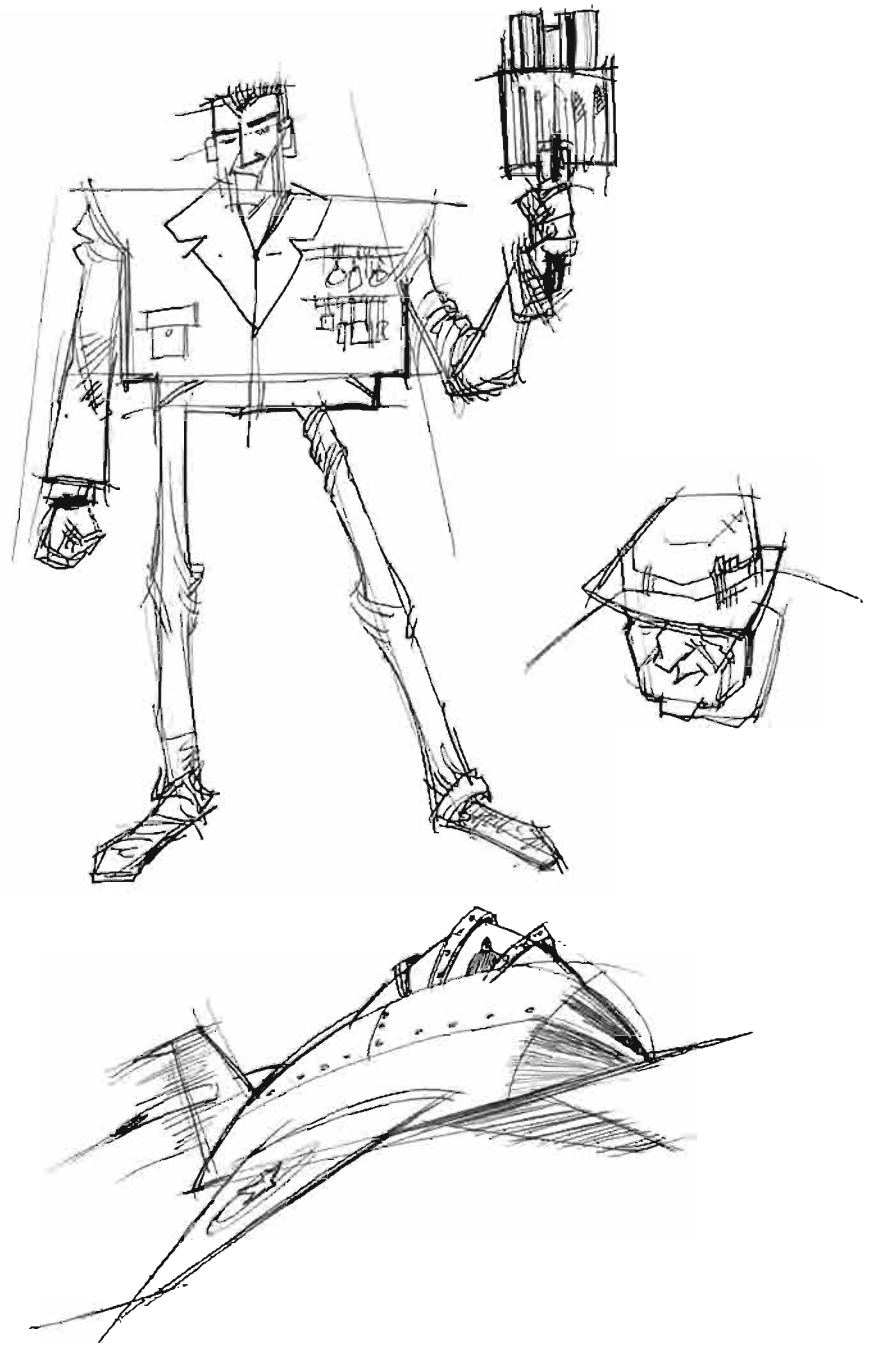


These three boxers are all defined from their silhouettes. Notice the more raised arms in the top drawing and how in the last, the arms of the boxer are against his sides. Look at the variety in shapes defining their anatomies. Their poses tell something about their personalities. I did this thinking about designing an occupation that interests me and showing different characters in a basic uniform.



These images, once again, represent a process from flatness to dimensionality. In the football player see the flat, pink spatial bounding boxes. They assisted me in designing the image. I really enjoyed pushing the legs far back in space under the character's body. A habit I have in designing faces is the straight line across the brow. Then I love hanging the eye shape from it. As in the top, center drawing.

In the Hunchback design, the cut paper came first. Its corner provoked the idea of this character. See how the flat, blue shape in the bottom design creates the illusion of space. The small stove reads as being far back because our minds fill in our own information from experience as to how large it should be relative to the character. The character's costume tells us he is a chef. Lastly, we have story with the fish in the pot and his expression.



Here I was drawing primarily with straight lines to define this military character. The idea of what type of dominant line to use, in itself, is a creative choice for you relative to what you are trying to say. The character is obviously not flexible in his choices. His body is a box. The fighter plane is a basic forceful shape.

This character, on the other hand, has strong robust curves that reflect his inflated anatomy, and ego for that matter.

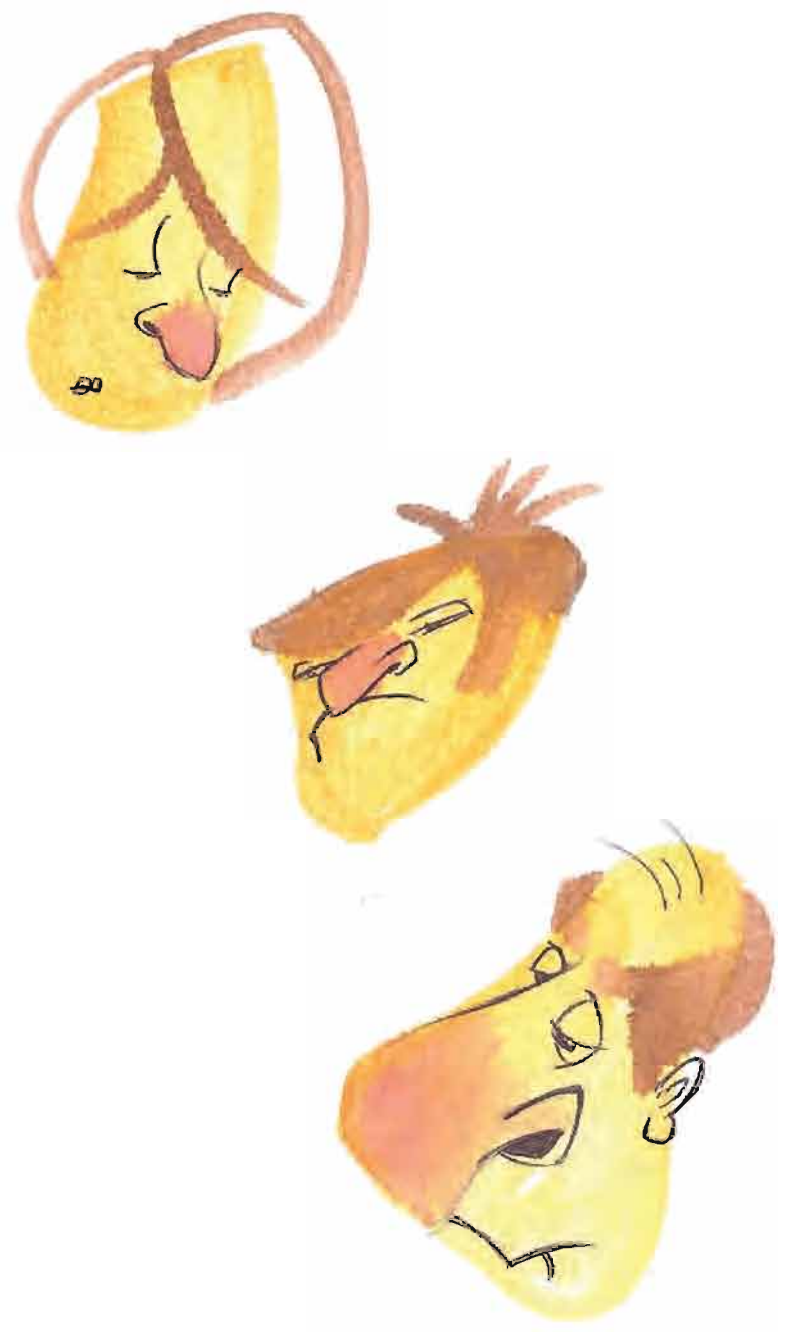
This design for a video game inspires rough and toughness through its use of chaotic line and texture. The splash of red behind the figure is used to make the green pop forward and insinuate violence.

Working in black and white is another great way to consider and practice the clarity of design. See the clarity of the old lady's two arms. One arm is out in space, away from the body, the other is silhouetted against the black dress.

Here are some caricatures I did based on rectangular shapes. You can see how I colored the design based on the same shape also.

Some of these are random caricatures. I believe the top left design is Ed Norton. I like the fluid shapes of the girl in the bottom right corner. See how the shapes of her eye in profile still indicate that the eyeball is round.

So here are six faces that are drawn from my imagination but were fed from real life. I pulled from my encyclopedia to design these. In the bottom left face, see how the design started as a flat shape to represent the head, and then I pushed in the fluid quality of the nose and built up the rest of the face around it.



These designs were executed in a few phases. First I painted the yellow shapes that now represent the heads. I then painted the brown hair shapes. Look at the bottom image and how the hair shape looks as though it wraps around the head. I then drew the facial features and painted the red of their noses. I want you to understand how from flat shapes, form emerged.

These designs came about as I was watching a Western film. The cowboy is more flat and graphic. The Indian has more form and structure within his silhouette. Each carries his weapon of choice, just recently used.

Exercises

1. Draw a model while using a reference of a preset style of design next to you.
2. Go to a costume workshop!
3. Think about character as you draw. What is the costume and pose telling you about the character? Use these answers to push your ideas.
4. Draw from films and television. Don't copy what you see, learn from it and form an opinion.
5. Look at your reference only as a launch pad. Form some ideas and then design without looking at your reference.
6. Use different media to vary your processes. Use what best describes what you have to say.
7. Look at different themes, cultures, sports, and more. Realize that the world is an endless resource of inspiration.

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Chapter 5
Reportage with Character

Drawing "on location," or what I like to call reportage, allows you to really build your reservoir of information for creativity. The different personalities, faces, clothes, and architecture out in the world are truly inspiring! There is nothing better than watching people when it comes to the vast richness of characters that live in our world.

Watching people's mannerisms and gestures informs you for your own character designs. Keep a keen eye for human behavior. An excellent book about human behavior is called *Man Watching* by Desmond Norris. This book is a must buy for any artist drawing characters that communicate humanity.

One of the most fun places for me to draw is Epcot in Disney World. Half of the park is dedicated to giving its guests the experience of traveling around the world in a day. Imagineers went and created environments mimicking different countries around the world. So they have the architecture, food, music, costumes, and more to let you feel the experience! Plus you get to observe real tourists from around the world enjoying the theme park. Granted, if you want China, it's better to go to China, but for one-stop drawing this is a great experience!

Explore your own neighborhood. The supermarket, mall, movie theater, or park are great places also. You don't need to go far for humanity. Look at yourself and watch what you do, when you do it, and why! The best place to learn is within yourself.

> The last quarter of a century of my life has been pretty constantly and faithfully devoted to the study of the human race—that is to say, the study of myself, for in my individual person I am the entire human race compacted together.
>
> Mark Twain

This has been said a million times so pardon the cliché, but bring a sketchbook with you everywhere and draw a lot. Practice makes perfect! Great work takes skill, in your mind and in your hands. The more time you put in, the faster you become skilled.

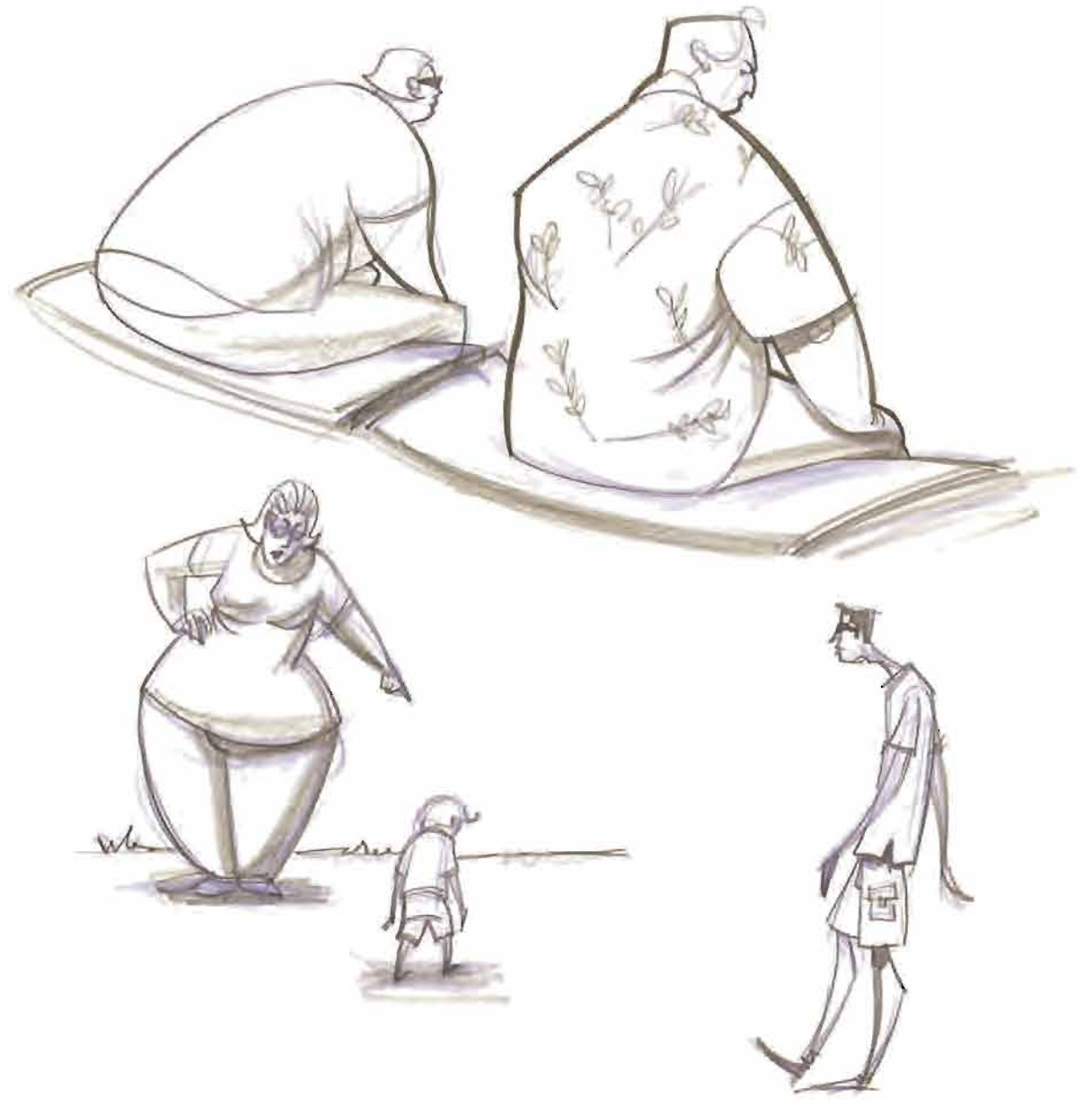
FINDING CHARACTER

The easiest way to start reportage is to observe one person at a time. Watch the person. Look at the mannerisms, clothes, and personality.

These are some little caricatures of people I drew while eating lunch at the zoo. Shape is my method for executing what type of character I feel they are. One thing that can help you is thinking about an imaginative occupation and history for the people you are observing. There is the librarian with her little glasses and deep cut neckline in the top left corner. Under her is the tough guy with a beach hat.

Here is the unhappy, middle America Dad. His children were causing some problems at the playground and this was his internal reaction to them. Look at how forceful shape is still involved. His head, body, and arm are clear examples of the shape. The drawing on the right is another caricature.

As soon as you have more than one person, you have a new dynamic. The relationship is what you are after. Notice how the characters define the relationship. How do they act toward one another? What is truly amazing is how we can read each other if we only pay attention. So much lost is lack of connection in a moment.



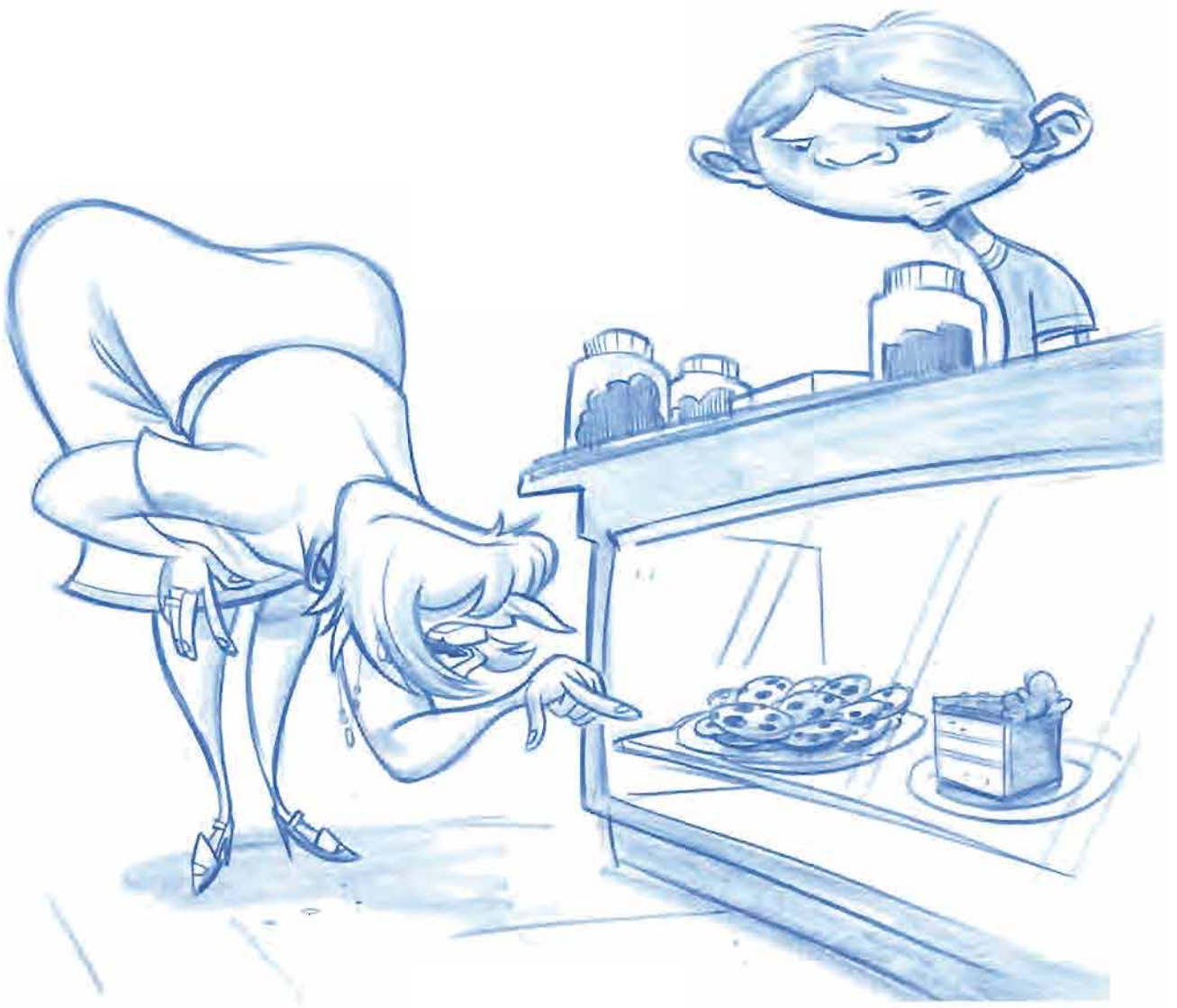
The top drawing is a father and his daughter sitting on a bench at the park. She was talking and he was not paying attention to their conversation. Below them you can see a mother screaming at her child. Lastly, there was a tall thin man that struck me because of his interesting posture while strolling. He rested all of his weight on the back of his heel.

MIKE DALEY

This is my neighbor who walks his dog around the block. He is easily spotted by the pipe sticking out of his white beard. He always looks a little suspicious of his surroundings and walks with his toes pointing outward, so I decided to push those qualities in this drawing. Everyone is surrounded by great characters in life, it may just take a bit of careful observation to recognize them.

This was a fun moment. This father had an incredibly large baby carrier on his back while his child had no interest in being carried in it. I pushed the size of the carrier and the child to contrast the two.

The next few drawings were done while sitting on a curb at a farmer's market in my neighborhood. I found it intriguing that one woman was pulling her hair as the other was selling the products on the table. The first woman seemed either nervous or insecure in this conversation.



MIKE DALEY

This woman was bent over at the counter, inspecting the cookies on display. She had quite a lot of questions and the person helping her behind the counter seemed to have been through this routine a thousand times. "Are these cookies organic?" "Yes." "Are these gluten free?" "No." She had a thin, pointy nose so I pushed that a bit to accentuate her pointing. Her back and butt also make a great triangular shape with her face to emphasize this even more.

The drawing on the left was about an awkward moment with this tall father and his tiny baby. Then I drew the bicyclist stretching and using the toll meter to do so. Lastly, I like the way this brother and sister were sampling from one of the tables.

Here is another father and son both eating an apple on the curb. This is a moment of mimicry. Ever notice how a small group of people will copy each other's poses? Yawning is probably the most famous case of this idea. Sometimes you can actually mimic a person and then lead them into copying you! Try it out, and notice how connected we are to each other.

I love when little children are trying to push their own carriage. I think about adults attempting to push their own cars. In the lower image, the father is with his two daughters. Notice how the one daughter, the youngest, is in between the others, protected. Kneeling down allows the father to more closely connect to his youngest daughter.

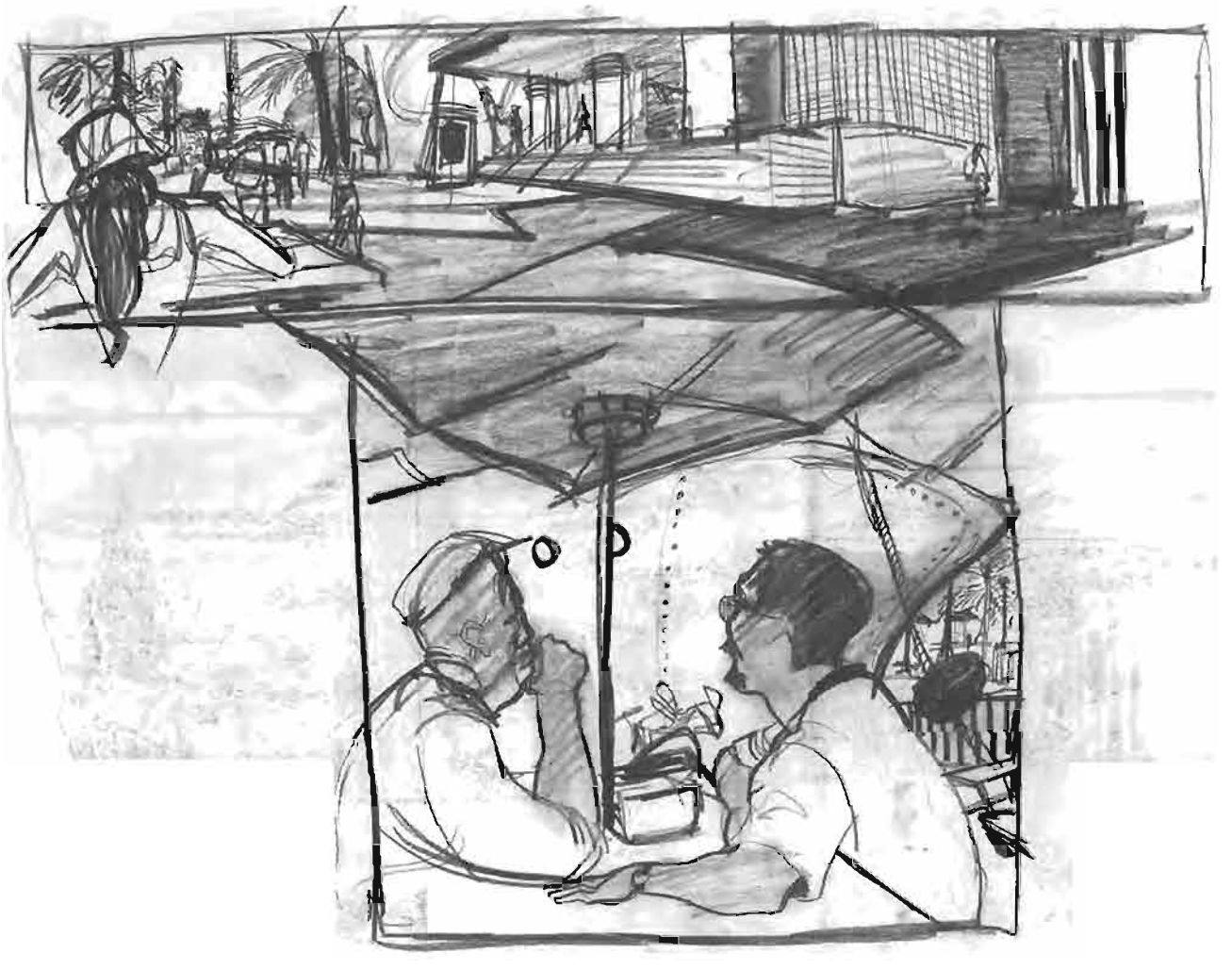
This is a clear example of a frustrated person. This man is impatient in waiting for the elderly woman to choose and pay for her items. The crossed arms and backward lean indicate his judging of her.

What I find of interest here is my note, "too cartoony, and not satirical enough." At the time I drew this, that meant that I needed to bring forth more of the reality to feed the design. I made up too much of the story.

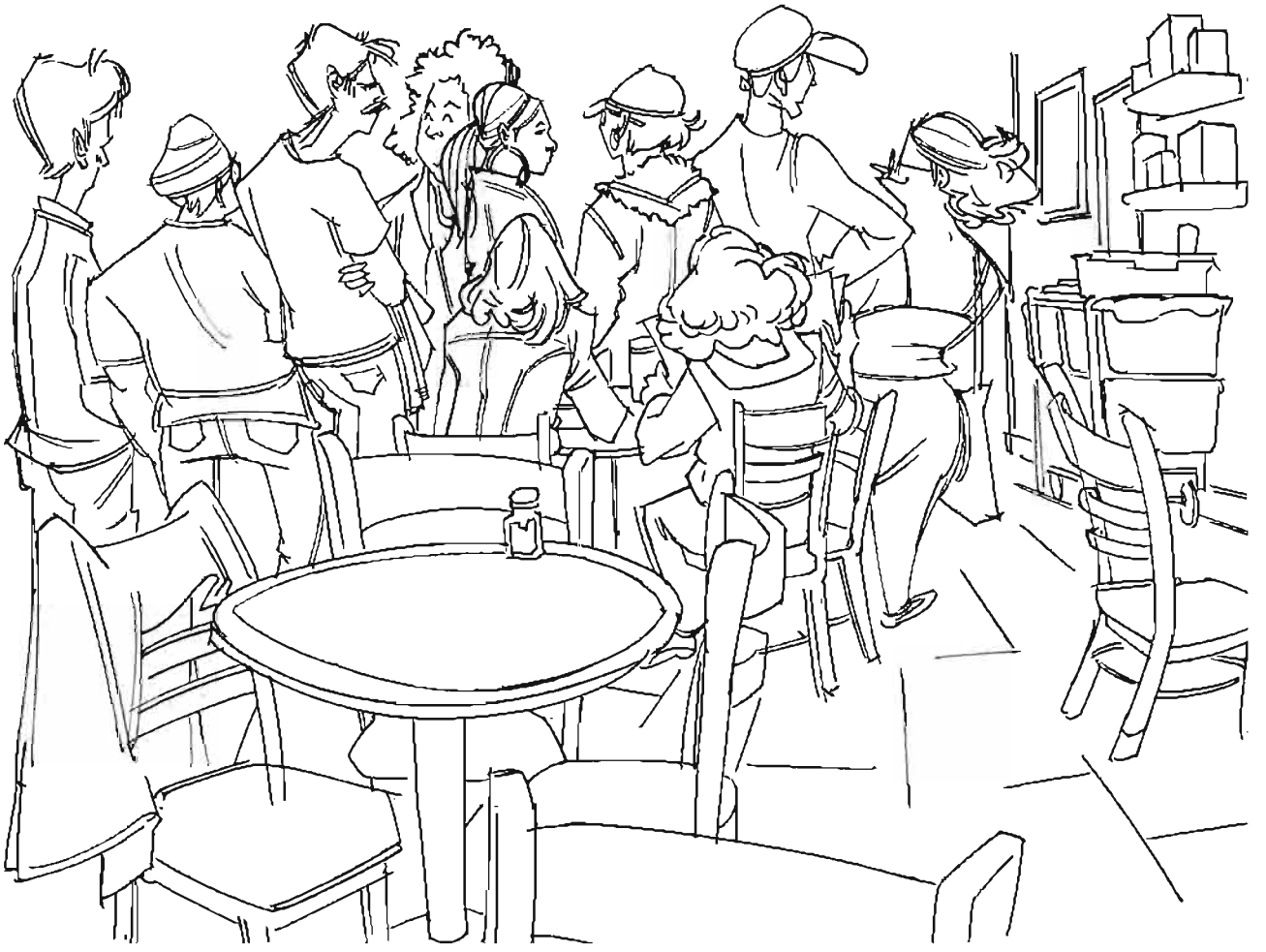
This musician was a great character! As you look through the drawing, be sensitive to all of the decisions you see. Notice the sloped-in chin, look at his fingers playing. These are all reactions I had in the moment.

Here were some tired parents. I took full advantage of drawing them while they were sleeping. Great story moment. I love that the woman was resting on the man's shoulder and that he had his legs and fingers entwined.

This drawing was purely about story. I wanted to get the idea across of the adults and children each having their own conversations. Notice they are created with line and the background in black. This helps silhouette the main ideas of the drawing.



In this image, two story moments connected into one through the abstract shapes of the floor and the umbrella. The top image is of another artist diligently illustrating the vast scene in front of her. The other shows two men in thought during a conversation. Interesting to see how neither is looking directly at the other.



MIKE DALEY

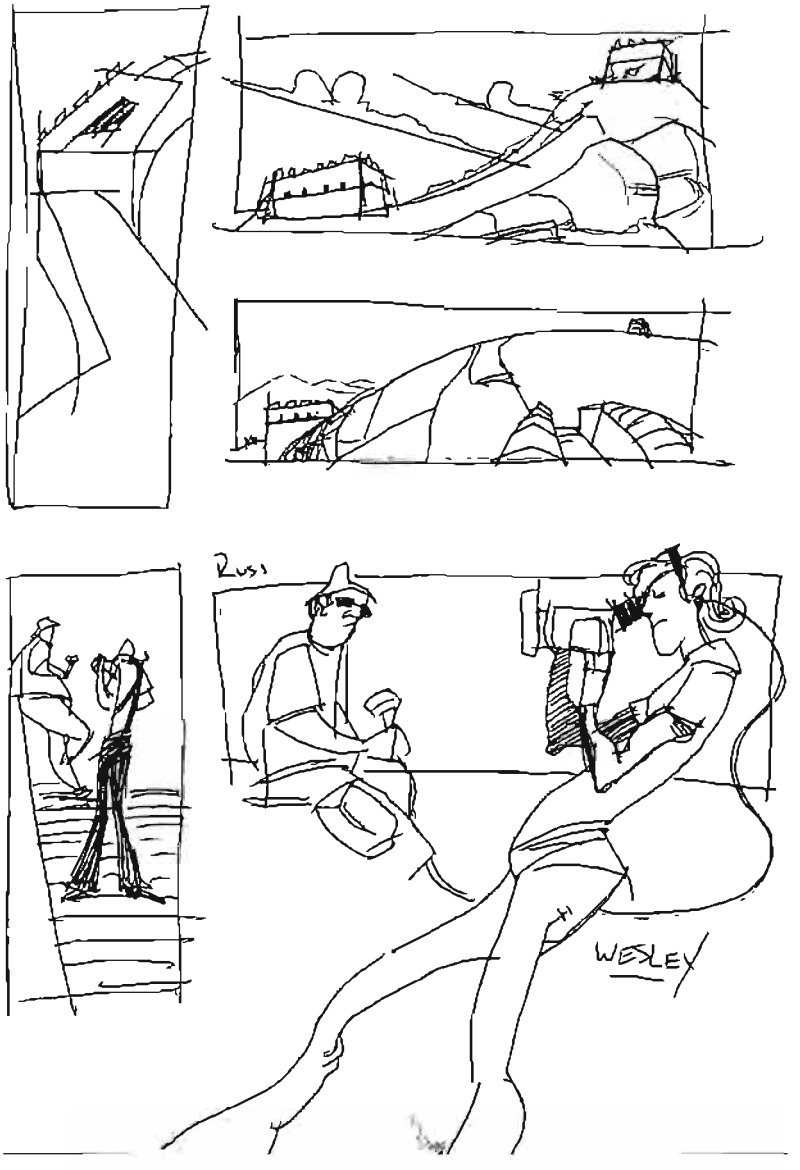
A group of people in line at a popular café by Dolores Park in San Francisco. It's interesting to see people stand next to each other and organize themselves in a line while doing everything in their power to not look at each other. I also notice that most of the chairs seem to be empty, which tells me that this group of people are sophisticated urbanites on the go, getting their quick caffeine fix and leaving.

CHARACTER LAYOUT

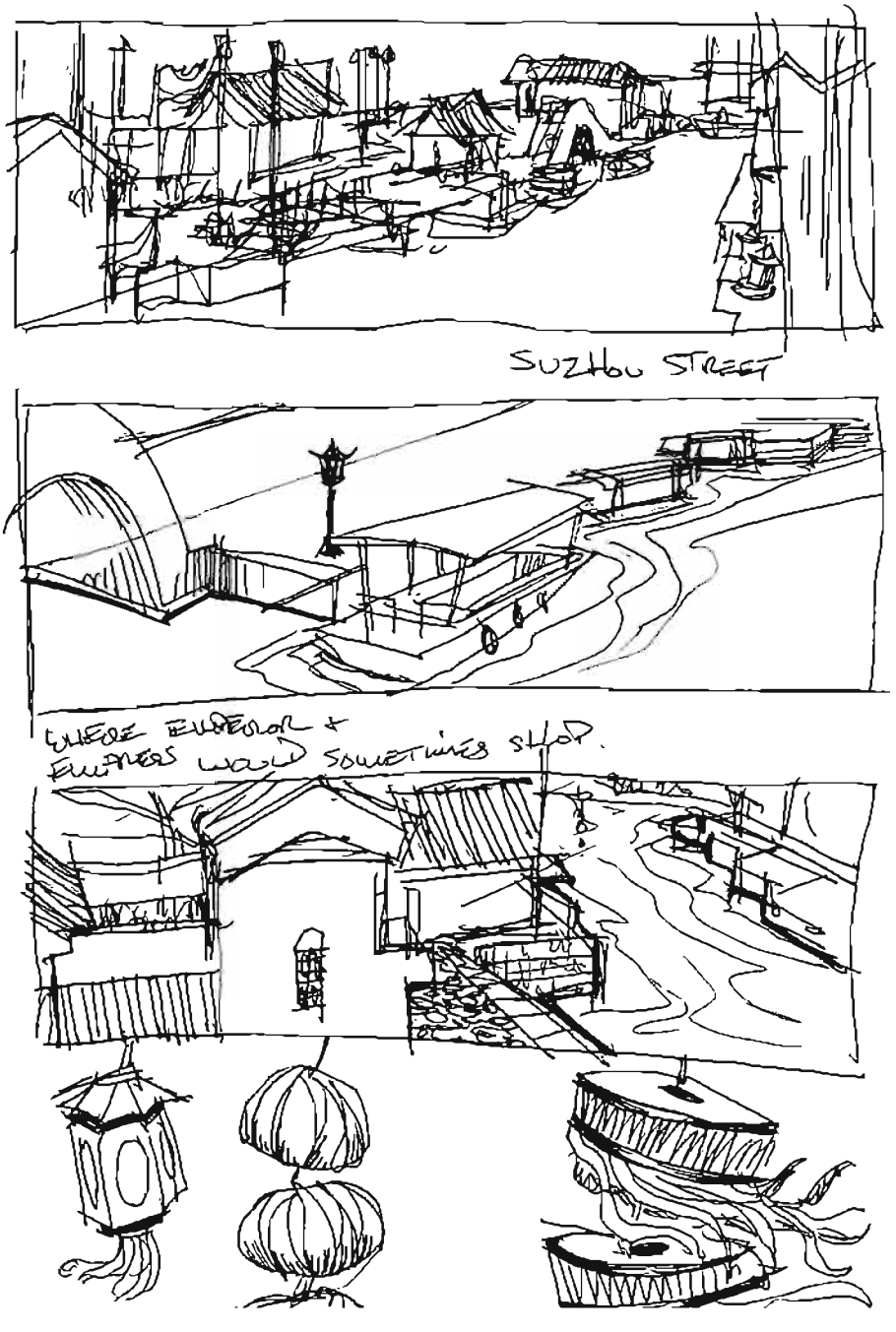
In this section of the chapter, you will see how I am composing the image along with the people that reside within it. I want you to see the bare bones to drawing environments and placing people in them. See how simple and abstract the shapes are that define the space. I try to draw in long vertical or horizontal frames. This already begins a strong and contrasted design. I choose if I am going horizontal or vertical depending on what I want to say. I use the same rule of thirds that I described in Chapter 3. See people as shapes, individuals, or crowds.

A few years ago I was asked by Beijing University to come out and launch their masters program for animation. I was there for two weeks and had fifty students to inspire and prepare for their projects. We all went to The Forbidden Palace (by taxi with fifty students, an interesting site) for a day to inspire cultural concepts for their short animated film ideas that they were going to pitch to me a week later.

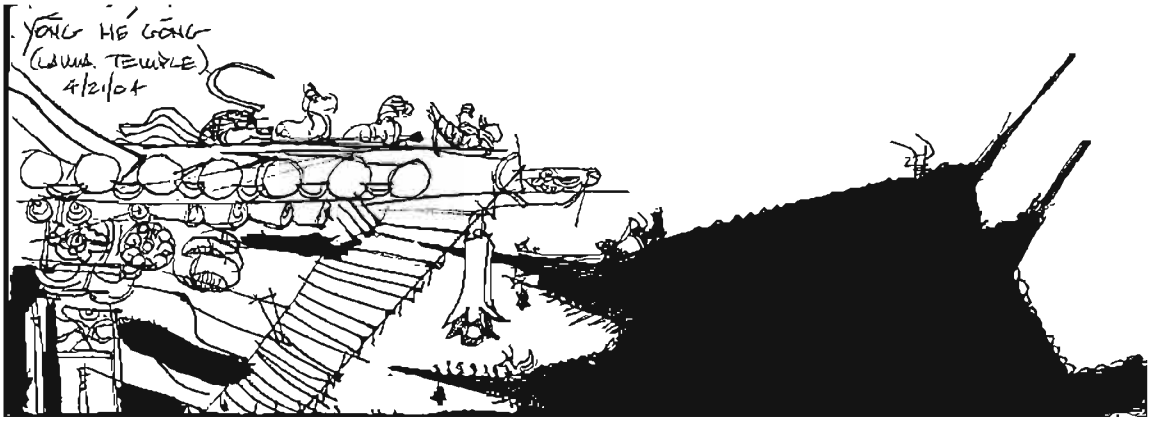
The two weeks I spent in China were a great experience. In between classes, my close friend Russ took me site seeing. This finally leads me to the illustrations below.



In the top left corner, you can see that I wanted the length of the Great Wall so I could go after its stairs, so vertical was a better choice. In the top two images on the right I was figuring out the relationship between the two buildings in the frame. Notice how I changed their sizes and how I inverted the curve between them to change the composition. The bottom two drawings are about the relationship between the two people. Notice the change in the level of intimacy in each. The far shot gives us location where the horizontal shot tells us a more intimate story.

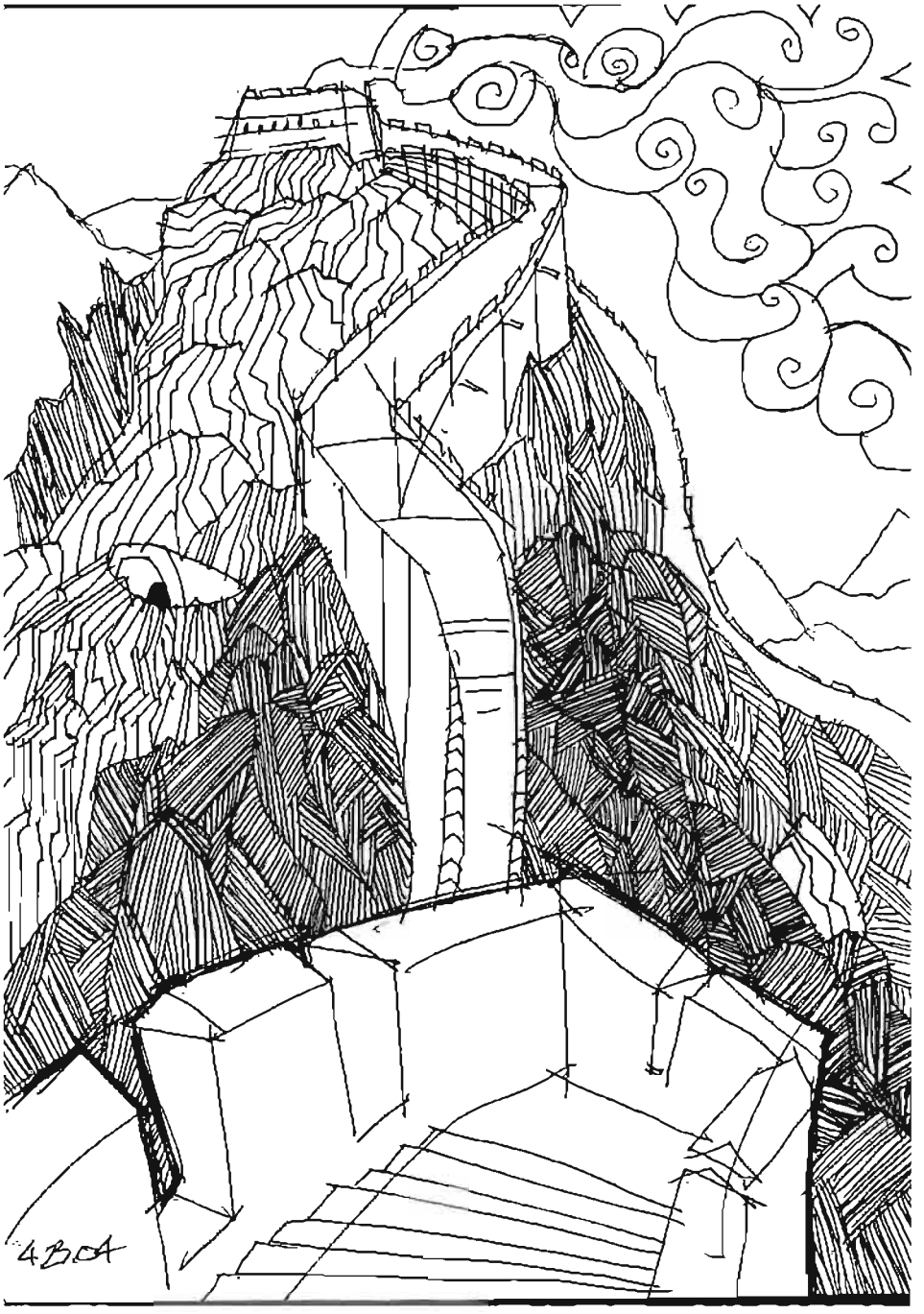


So here is another page from my China sketchbook, which by the way was bought in China. It is an accordion-style book that I believe Chinese write in, vertically. For me this book was great because it was thin and long so it already was a great shape. It can be opened in different widths and ratios because of its accordion-styled structure.



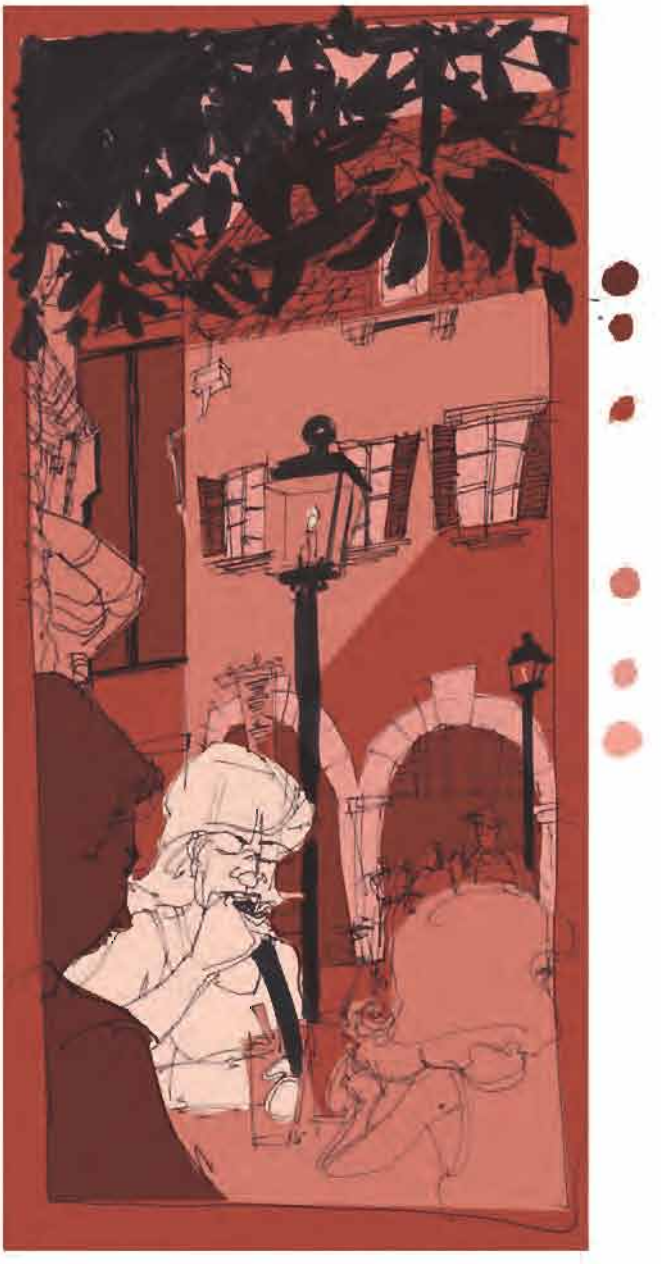
This is a study to feed my brain. My thought in this design was to look at the detail of the roofline and see how it defined the awesome silhouettes of these beautiful structures! This is about big to small and detail to big shapes.

Here is the second image from the Lamma Temple. This visual was from a walkway between many different buildings in the complex. I loved the little bells that hung from the roofs and played with them for design. They represent contrast and affinity. I broke up the vertical shape of the frame with the soft horizontal curves of the roofs. If I were to go back to this design to improve it, I would enlarge the negative space in the top of the frame. Why? Because the roof line on the right cuts in close to the halfway mark of the vertical distance of the frame.

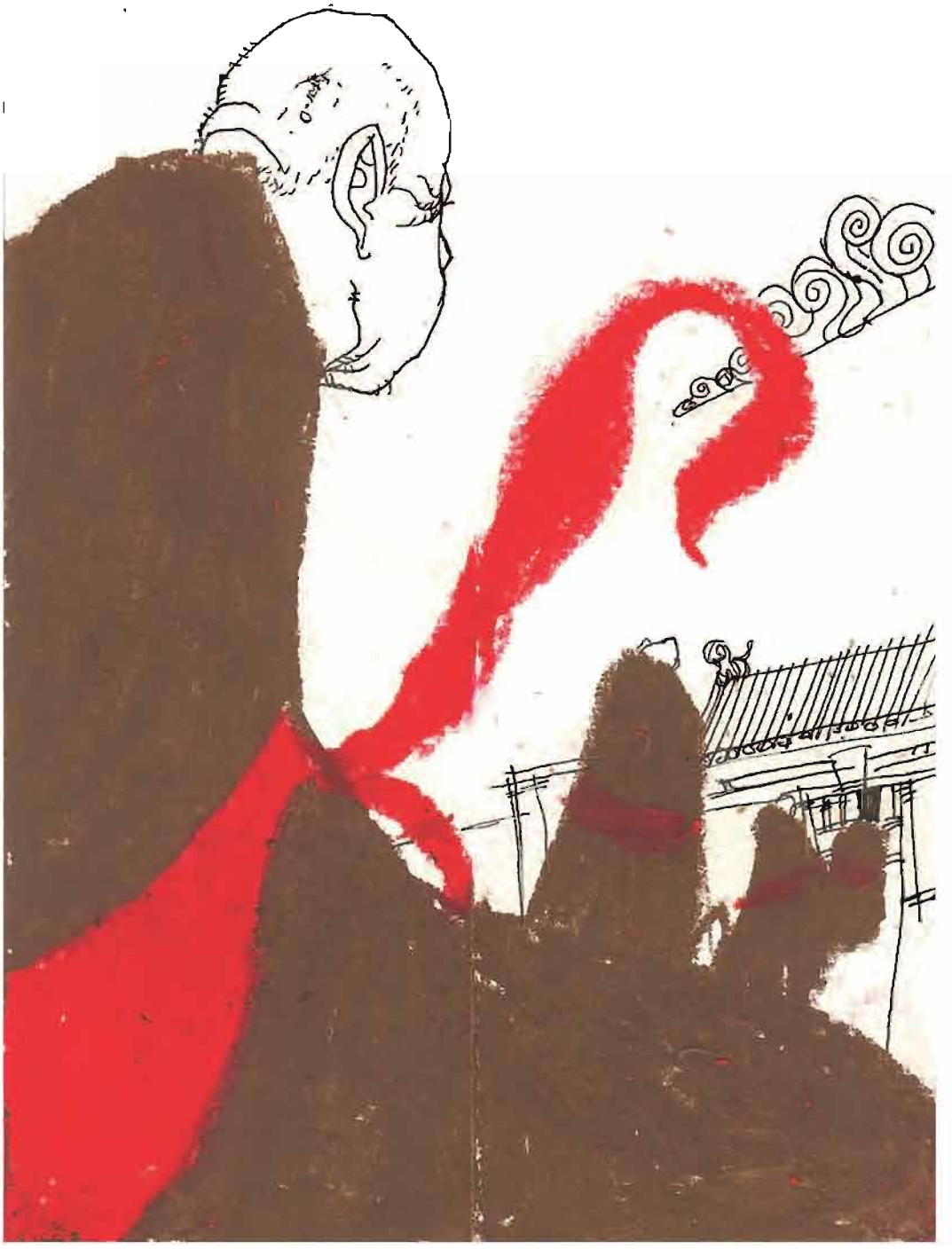


This was executed while standing on The Great Wall of China! Again, I used flat shapes to help me compose the image. I placed the next guard station at the peak of the design to describe the height of the mountain the wall was constructed on. The stairs in the foreground curve in one direction and I then placed the wall to the left as if it had been pushed out of the wall. All of the detail and time were placed within my initial abstract thumbnail.

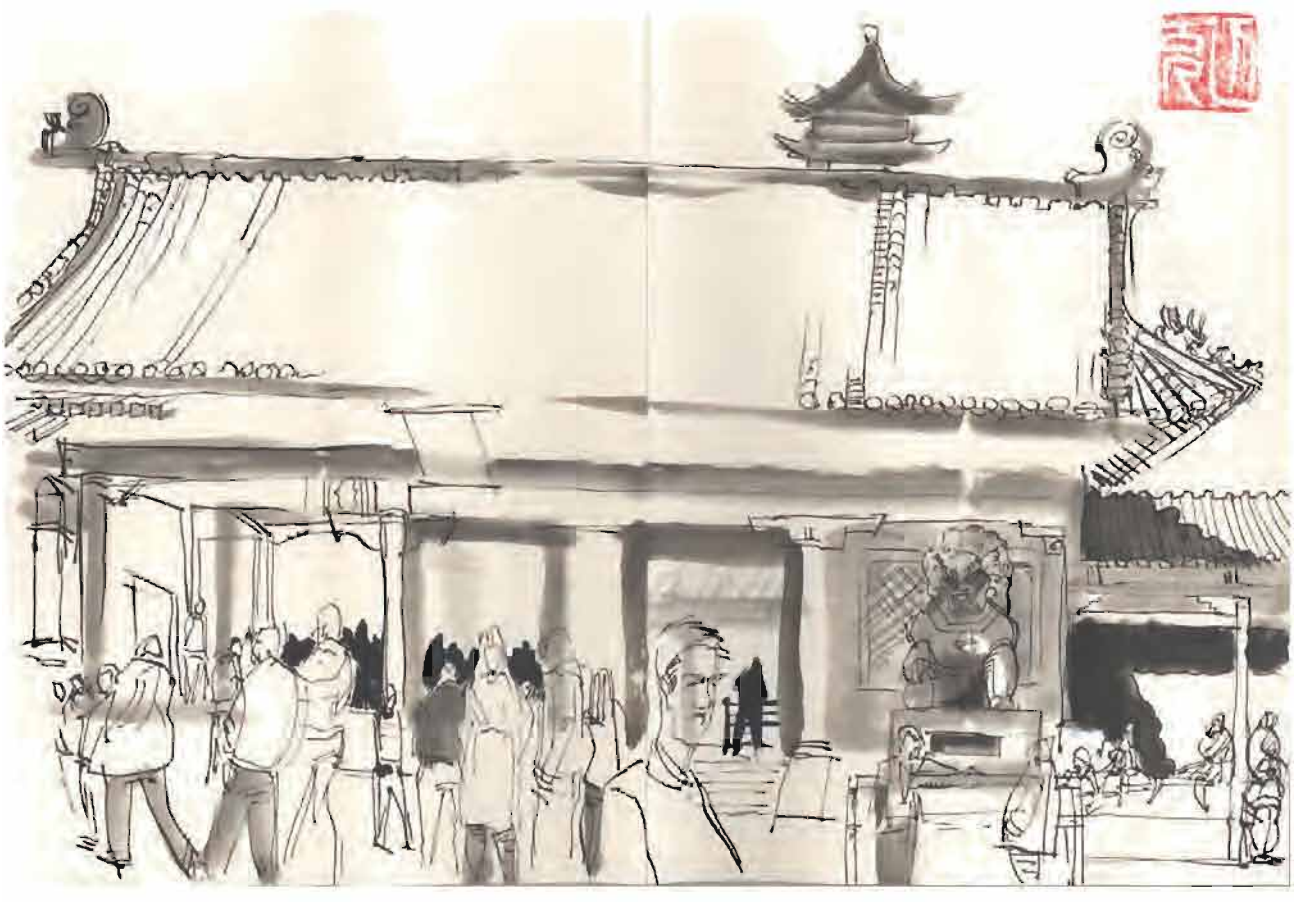
Here is another example of looking at reality and extracting design. This lets me then use it for more ideas. I boil it down. These were done in MGM Studios in Florida. So, besides me looking at shapes, with line, I also played with black and white shapes. I love the image in the bottom right. After concentrating on shape, I turned my focus on this story moment of tourists walking the streets in raincoats and umbrellas.



This image started off as a black line drawing. At this stage I am thinking about the design based on story. I later brought the drawing into Photoshop and added this monochromatic color scheme all based on tonal contrast. I pushed my idea of making the mother the focal point by making her the lightest area in the design and placing that light color next to the father, who is the darkest red in the design. I also cheated in a shadow shape on the back wall on a diagonal right into the mother's head. You are now forced to look at her. I also left my palette on the side for you to see how simply this is painted.



This image is a compositing of different moments at a Lama temple. I drew it at the front gate to the temple and added the monks to the image. Their variation in size defined the vast sense of depth.



During my stay in Beijing, I went to the Summer Palace. This is its entrance. The stamp in the right hand corner is my name, which in Chinese means long stride, ironic since I am 6'2". My point to this information is pushing culture and personalization into this reportage drawing. Space or depth is indicated by the ratio relationship between the people. The larger ones are in the foreground and smaller in the background.

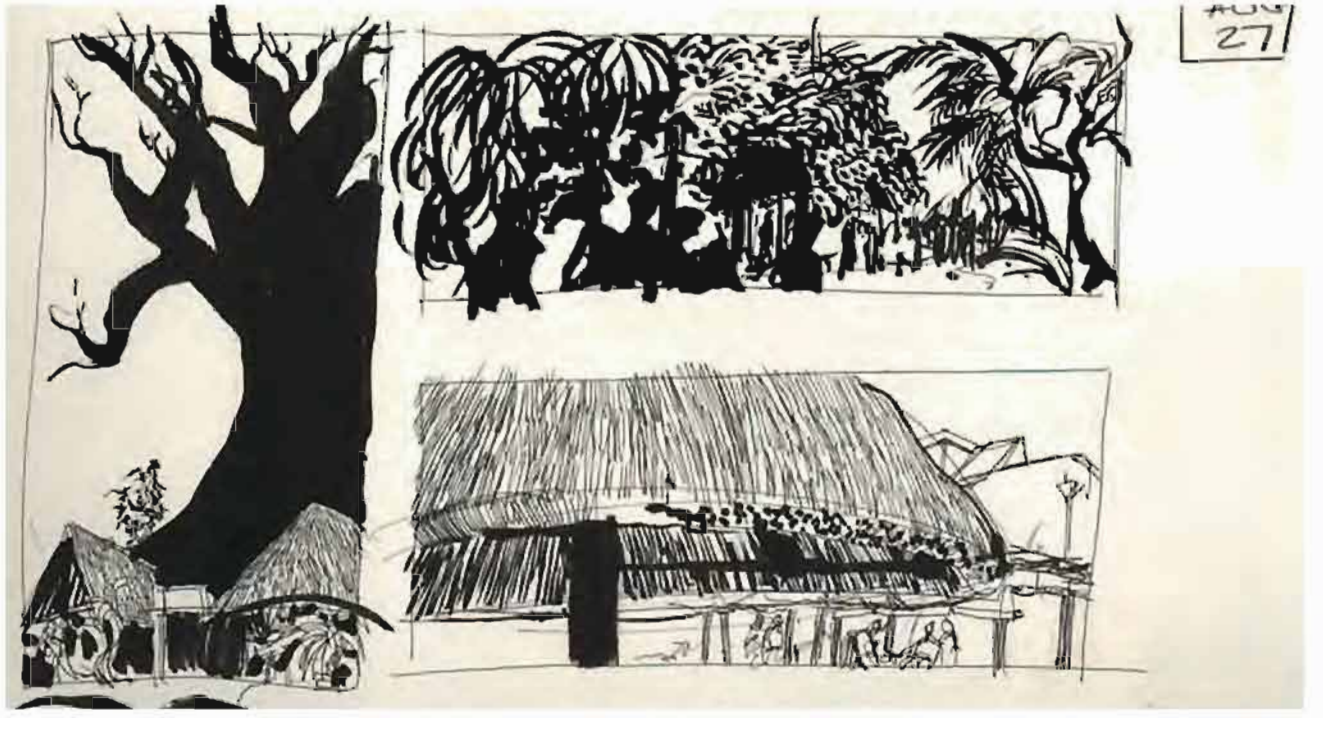
ARCHITECTURE WITH CHARACTER

All of the different methods I have shown you for seeing and designing with opinion to clarify character also pertain to inanimate objects. In the case of reportage, this is usually architecture.

I went to The School of Visual Arts to become a comic book penciler. I struggled for years far beyond school trying to figure out how I would draw architecture and backgrounds. I hated drawing them. It was abstraction and design that led me to a method that I found intriguing and satisfying enough to draw anything. I went down the professional path of animation but I still want to and will illustrate comics.

This was done at the China Pavilion at Epcot in Disney World. The architecture was my primary character. I wanted to get the sweeping rooflines and rich colors. The crowds of vacationers were secondary here so they are drawn in a thin gold line, along with some of the architecture. Therefore, they become part of the background but not as important as the red and green areas. I try not to make a big deal out of materials. After learning your trade with basic tools like china markers and smooth newsprint, go and play with what you think feels right to your experience. In this case, the sweeping rooflines were drawn with the ink dropper tip from the Dr. Martin's dye of the color I was using. On top of that, I drew with a gold pen and marker.

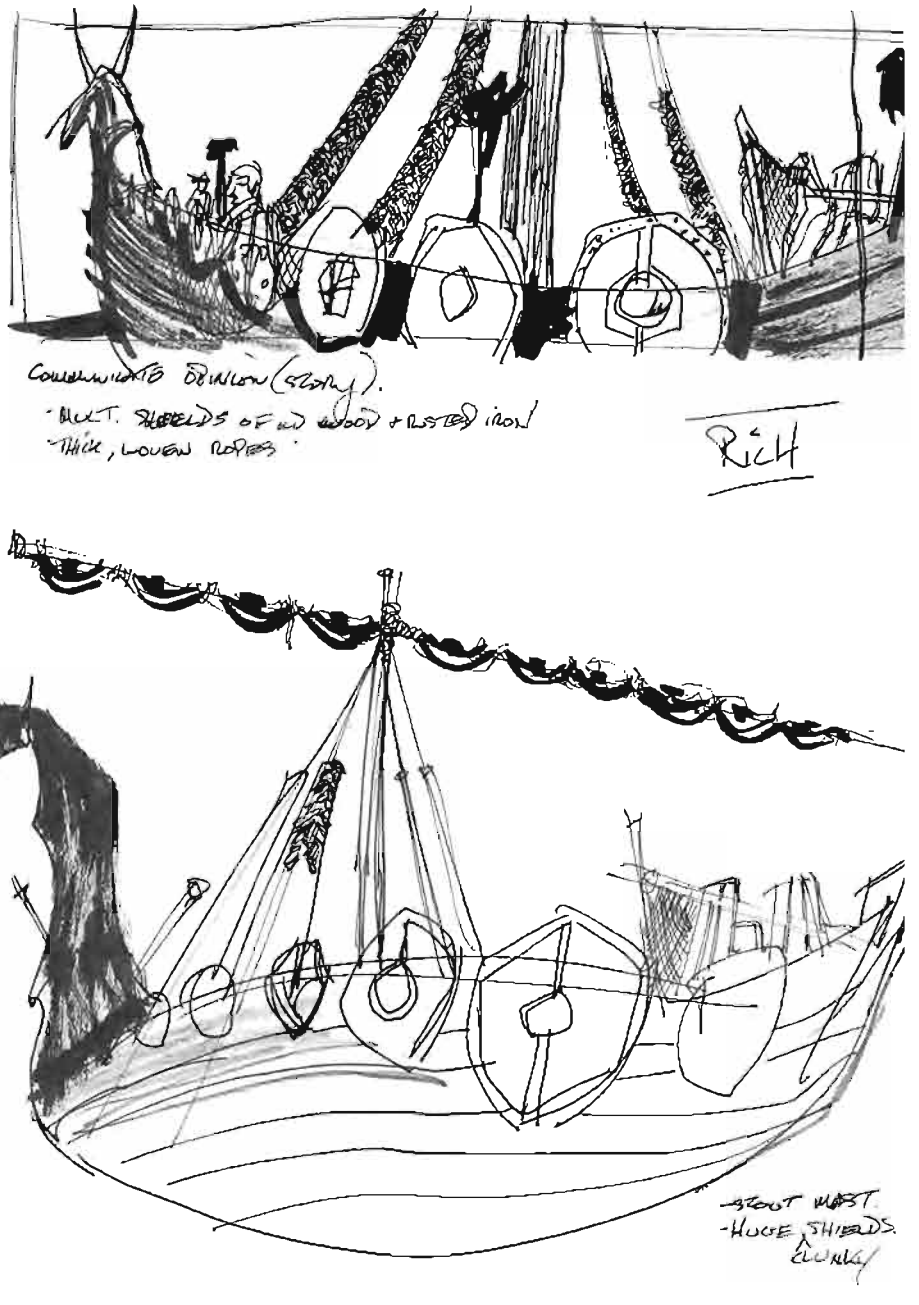
Simply curving the street adds a fun, animated feel to the design. The trick is understanding perspective well enough to make all of the street's elements fit into this pushed grid of perspective.



These designs are of the African section of Animal Kingdom. Notice how all three images are designed in thirds.

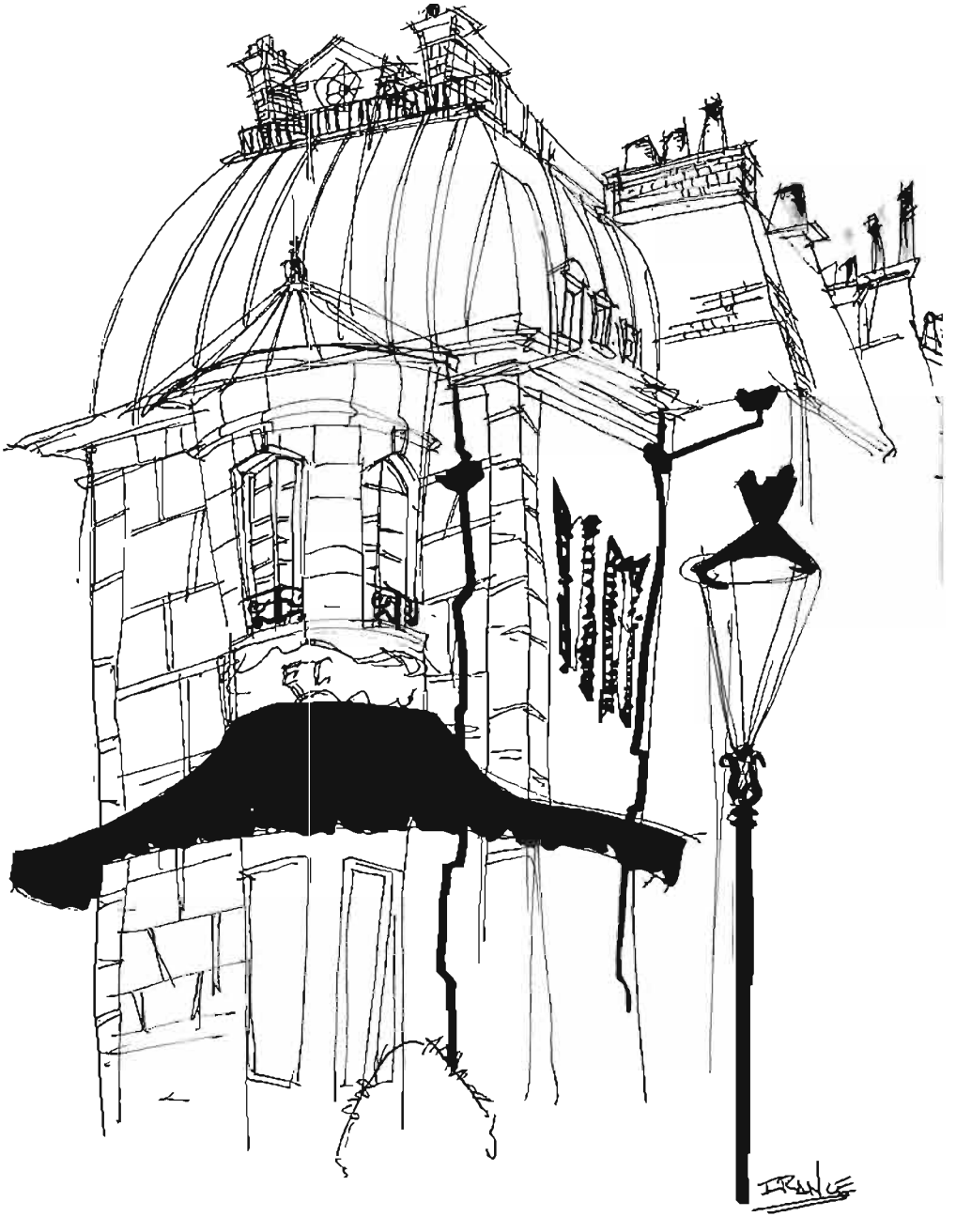
This page is full of studies of the Germany pavilion at Epcot in Florida. The page is a composition of moments to reflect the feel of the location. All of this information feeds the illustration on the next page.

Simple curved lines caricature the architecture. I also played with the ratios, stretching the roof against the base of the building. The building is basically a triangle sitting on top of a rectangle. Reality sets into the drawing with the shingles I drew on the roof. Detail on top of pushed design makes it believable.

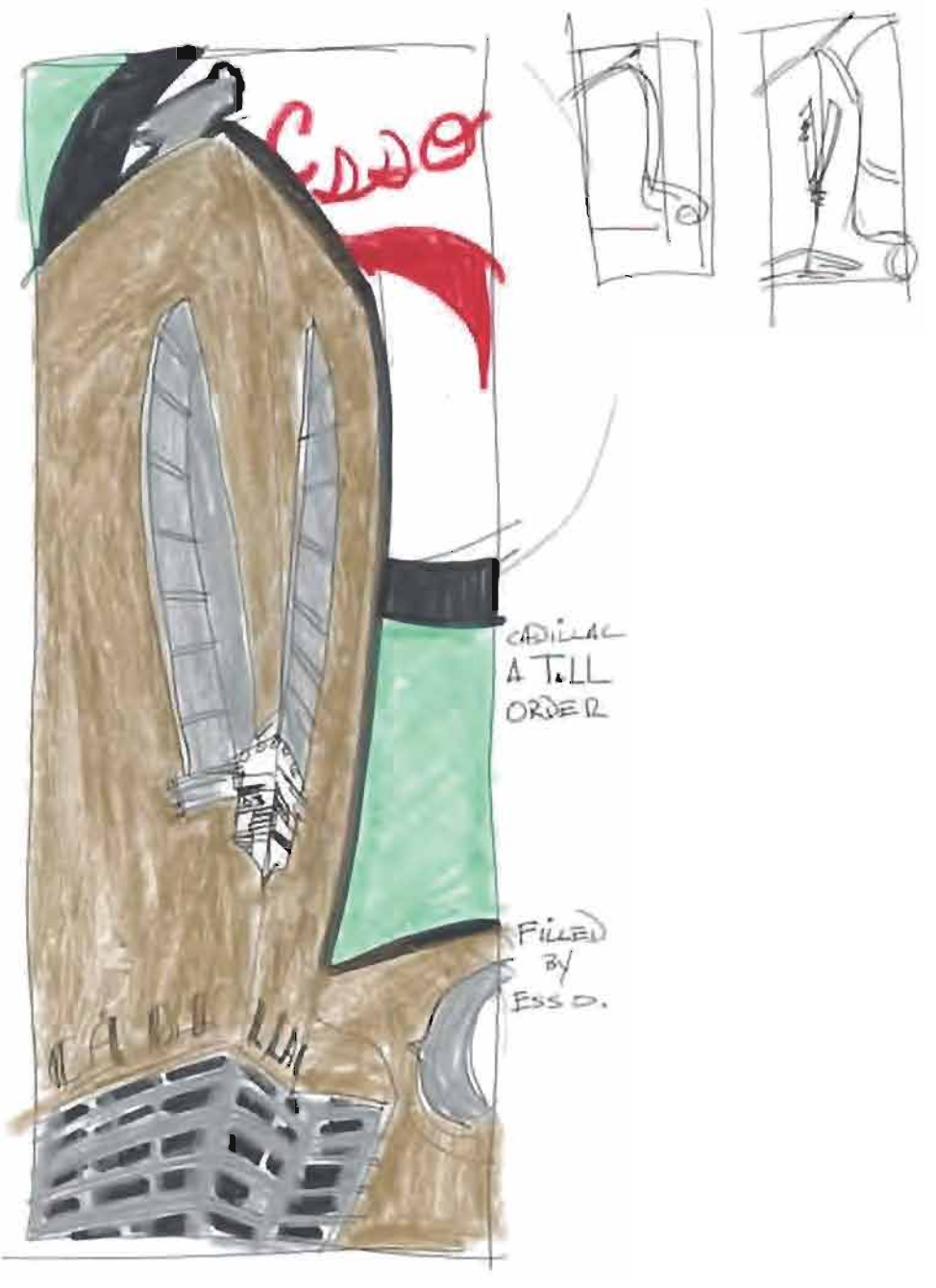


The top drawing of this Viking boat is my study. You can read my notes about the details and character of the boat. The adjectives I use to describe it feed my desire to push beyond pure analysis. The second drawing is my reaction to my study. It almost fights its way out of me after studying the boat. My desire is to get my opinions down on the page.

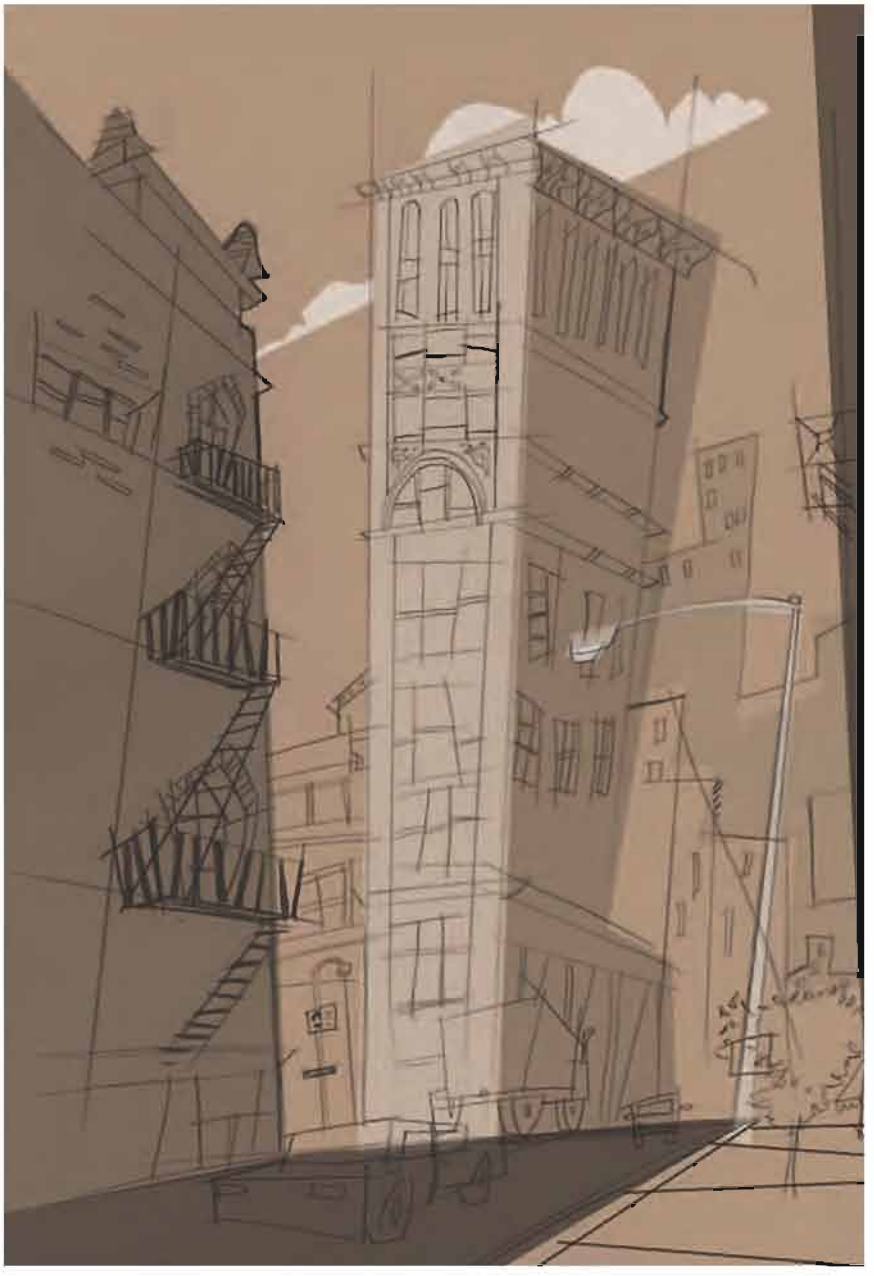
This is a drawing of the Haunted House in the Magic Kingdom. The idea here of course was to go after the eeriness of the environment. I silhouetted the house and made it feel as if the black were either dripping or grabbing at the tombstones below. In a way, it reveals the death that resides under the ground at the base of the house.



I love this drawing. Remember at the beginning of the chapter how I explained I had found a way of drawing architecture that is satisfying to me? Here it is. This is all abstract shapes to me. Look at the chimney tops. Notice that they are flat boxes of varying heights and widths with some tone. The windows and bricks of the building are the same. I then contrasted all of this line with the black gutters and overhang.



Here is a great example of using the ratio bounding box. You can see how I stretched the car vertically and kept the headlights low. In the top right corner you can see my initial thumbnails. The most important part of this design is that the slogan, "A Tall Order," is why I applied the vertical stretch.



This last design was a rough concept illustration. All of the abstract ideas for this design came from the prior knowledge discussed in this book. I wanted skewed perspective, like the main building. See how the building gets larger as it moves into the sky. It should get smaller. The seams on the sidewalk move in haphazard directions. See how with tone, I brightened one side of the building for focus. I also made the street lamp point toward that building. Notice the rule of thirds from left to right and top to bottom.

Exercises

1. Travel small and light. It is fun and exciting to work on location. I have found that it helps me to plan a bit before I go out. Have a backpack or shoulder bag filled with sketchbooks, pads, scissors, pens, markers, and water.

2. Bring a reference book with you to inspire some direction in your work in case you don't feel it on location. This book can also be predetermined. For example, you might go to Chinatown and bring a book on China or on Germany and combine cultures!

3. Draw three hundred and sixty degrees around you. This is a great challenge! Look for the multiple points of perspective.

4. Add something from the environment into your image. For instance, glue down a menu from a cafe you are sitting in or a train ticket from a location you are traveling to.

5. When looking at people, imagine their personality, lifestyle, occupation, and family. Use these ideas to feed the design.

6. Be an excellent observer of the humanity you are a part of. Take nothing for granted.

Chapter 6
Animals with Character

When drawing animals, we will use all of the tools we have used in previous chapters. The main difference here is the obvious; we are now drawing different species of life.

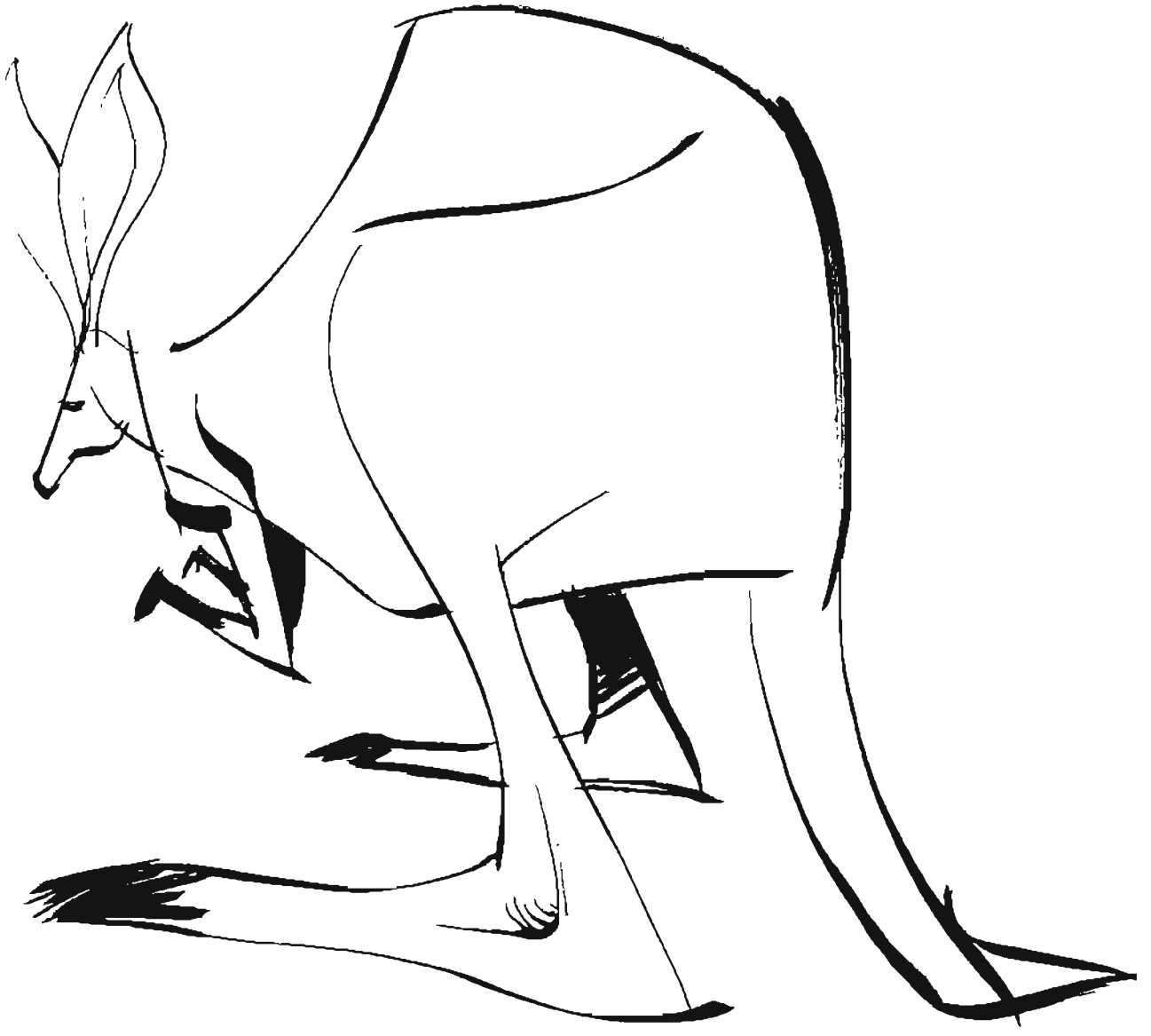
So what do we do? We imbue them with humanity! We search and find human character traits from facial features and expressions to body language that creates story. I try to get some expression in the animals' faces to humanize them. We relate to the work on a more emotional level through these human ideas.

Animals give us interesting shapes to play with and be inspired by. Know your human and animal anatomy to assist you in creating informed designs. Knowing animals gives you a whole new pool of information to work from. You could combine humans and animals to create new races of aliens, monsters, and other species for intellectual properties.

In the past, the style for this combination was anthropomorphism. That would be to create human characters with animal heads and hair as skin. Today, most animal characters stay true to shape and function with their faces suggesting that of the actor that gives them a voice.

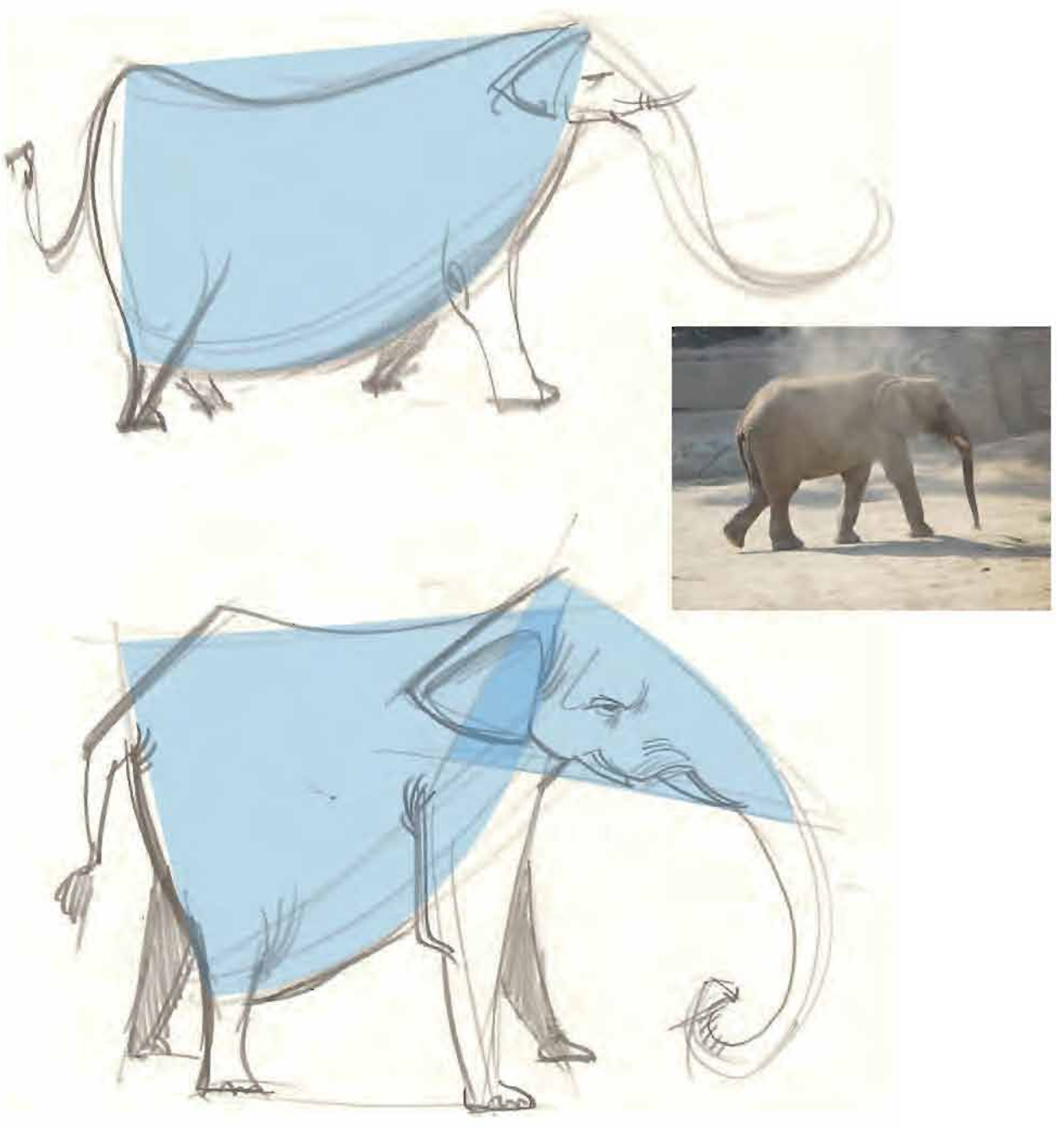
In the following pages, I am going to show you how to create character from animals at the zoos I frequent.

When I take a class to the zoo, I start with the seals then move on to the more and more complicated grades of animal anatomy. The most complex animals are those with hoofs. Why do I do this? Well the shapes above answer that question. The top shape is the seal. This basic shape can be found in almost every animal. The animal must have a spine to fit into this theory. The second shape could be cats, dogs, horses, goats, etc. The body shape could be an ostrich or other type of bird. Just by tweaking the proportions, you can draw any animal!

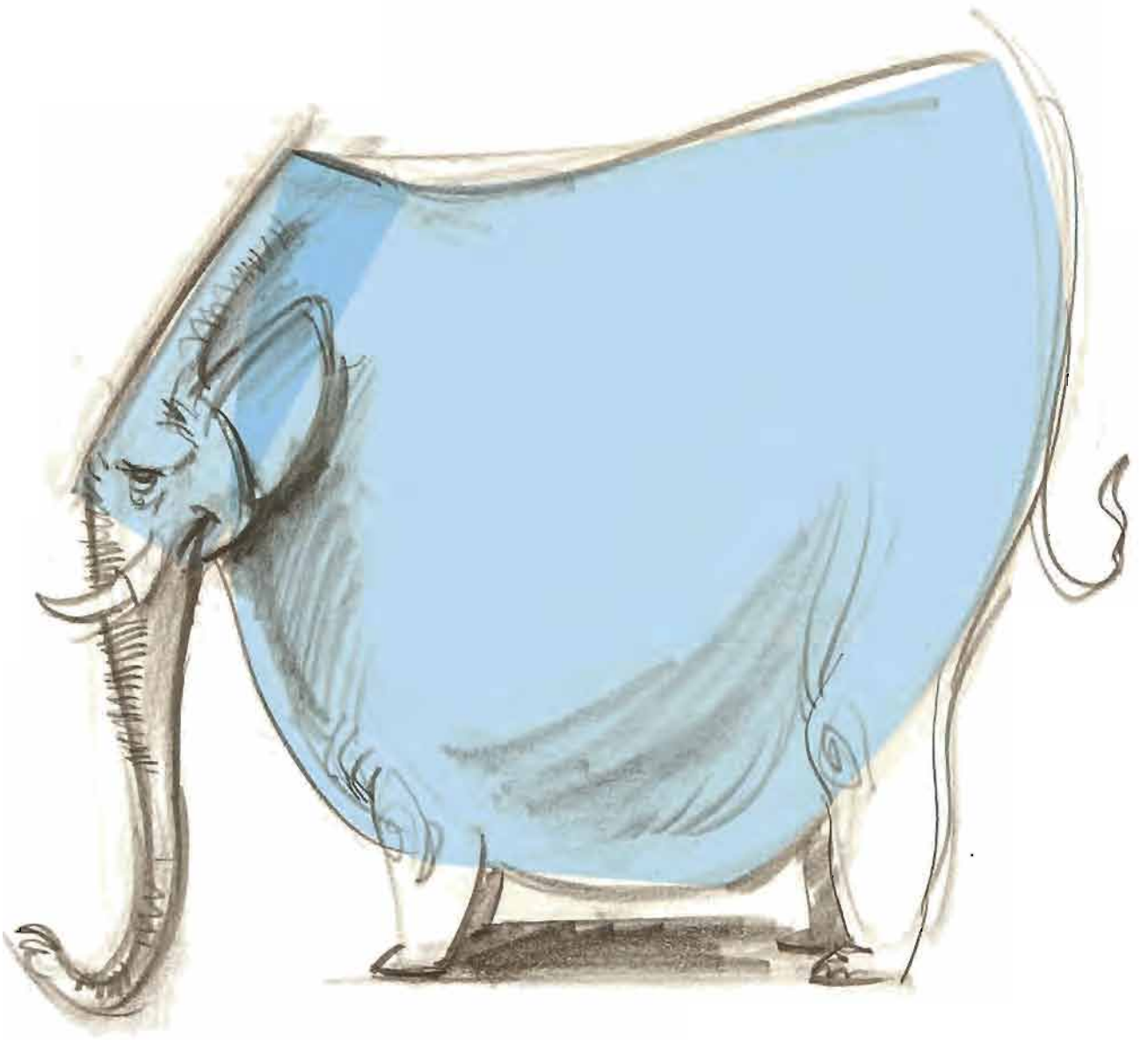


This kangaroo was designed with a calligraphy marker. This allows for the quick thick to thin lines. I love the expressiveness the line receives with this tool. See how the base created by the kangaroo's feet was a thought for me. I like the large feet and their placement with their size difference to form a solid base for the kangaroo to stand on. In the top right, I pulled out the shape of the body for you to see how it flows to the head.

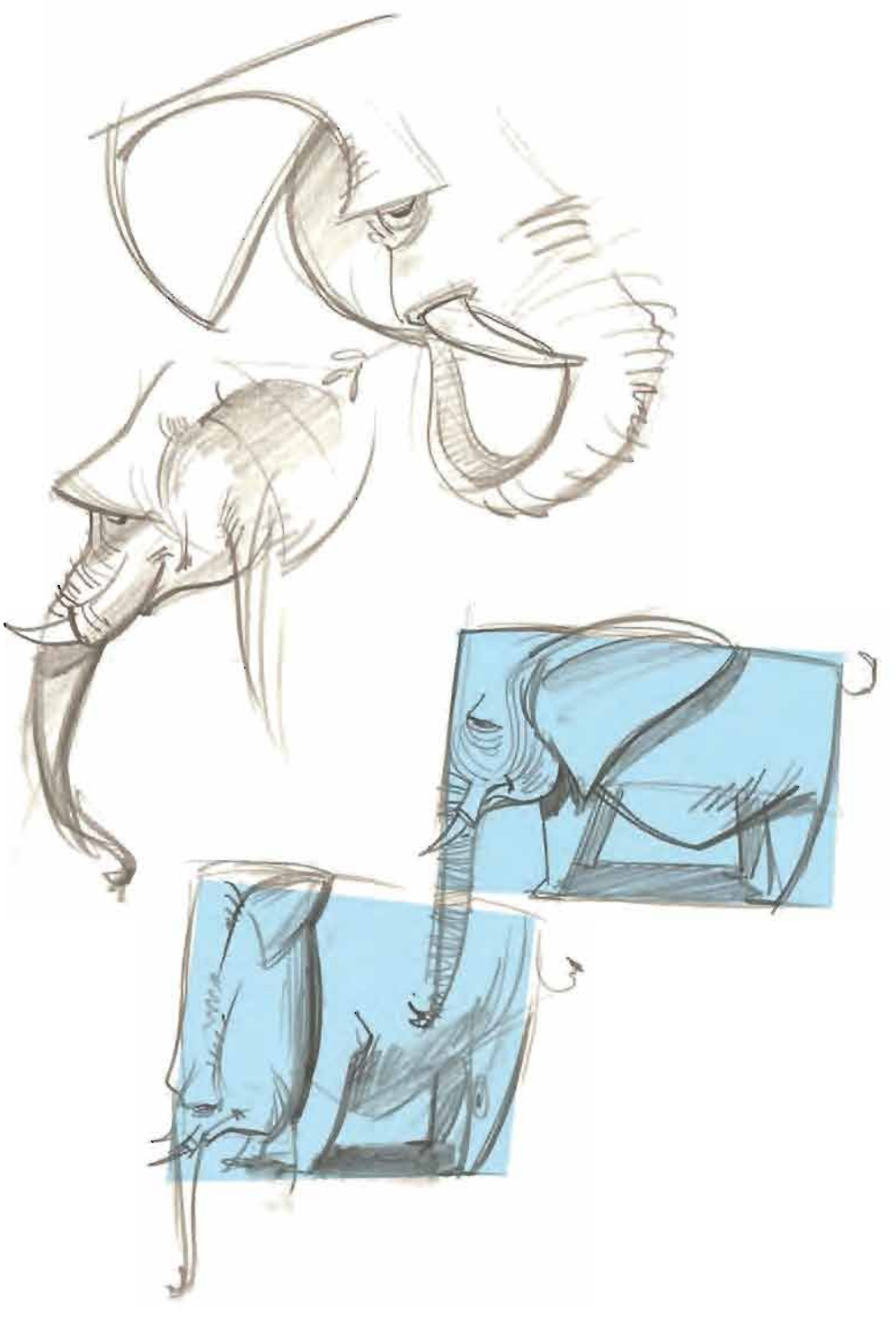
This coyote was given a long neck and thin legs with large paws. He seemed unhappy and uncaring. The downward angle of the eyes is what gives him that emotion. Again, I have given you the forceful shape of the body into the head. You can start with shapes when drawing animals.



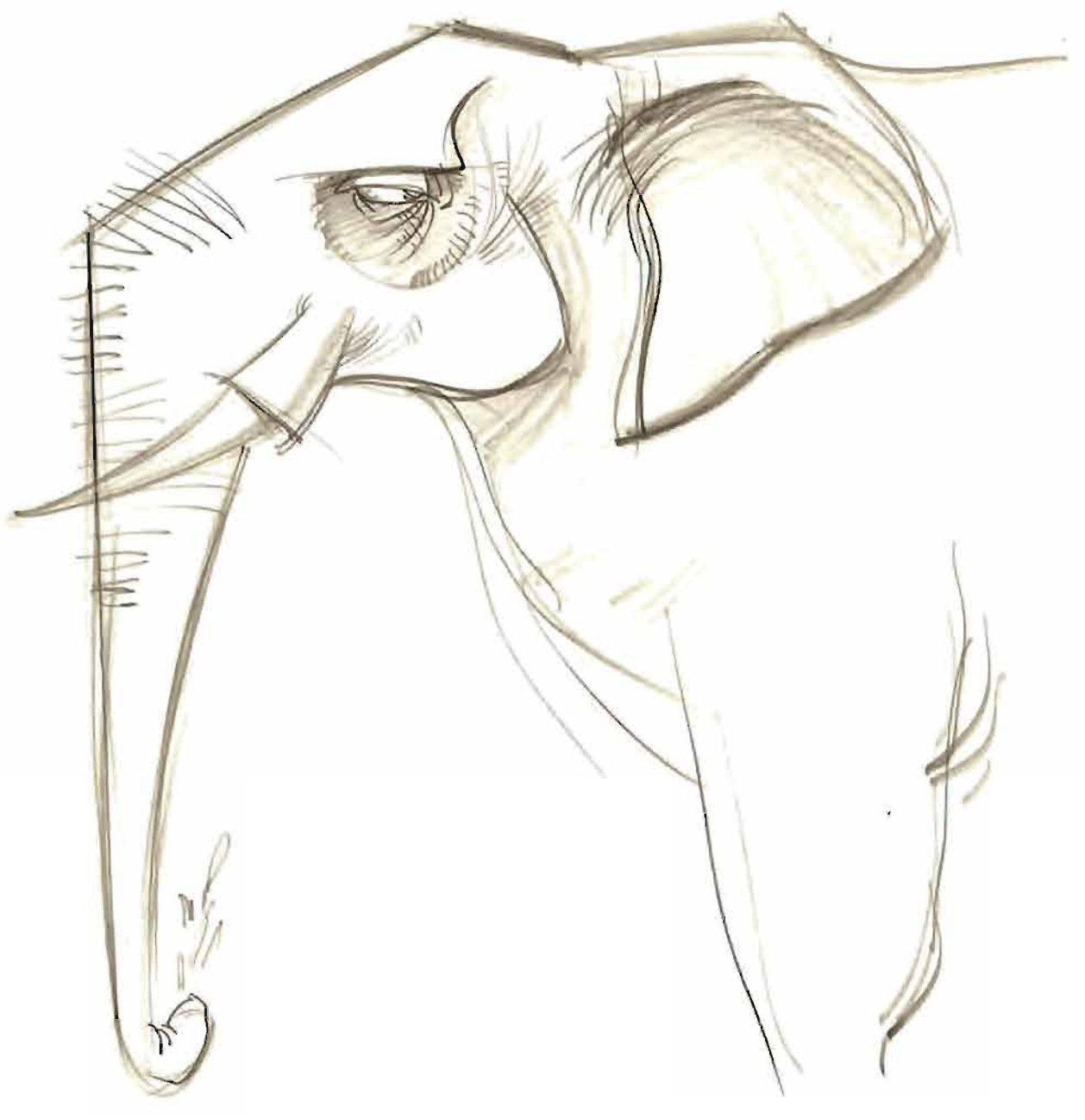
I love drawing elephants. In these images of the entire elephant, you can see how the triangle is the dominant shape of design. The straight is used for the strength of the back while the soft, forceful, gravity stricken belly is curved. The inverted triangle is used for the head. Here the curve is the forward arc of the face and trunk.



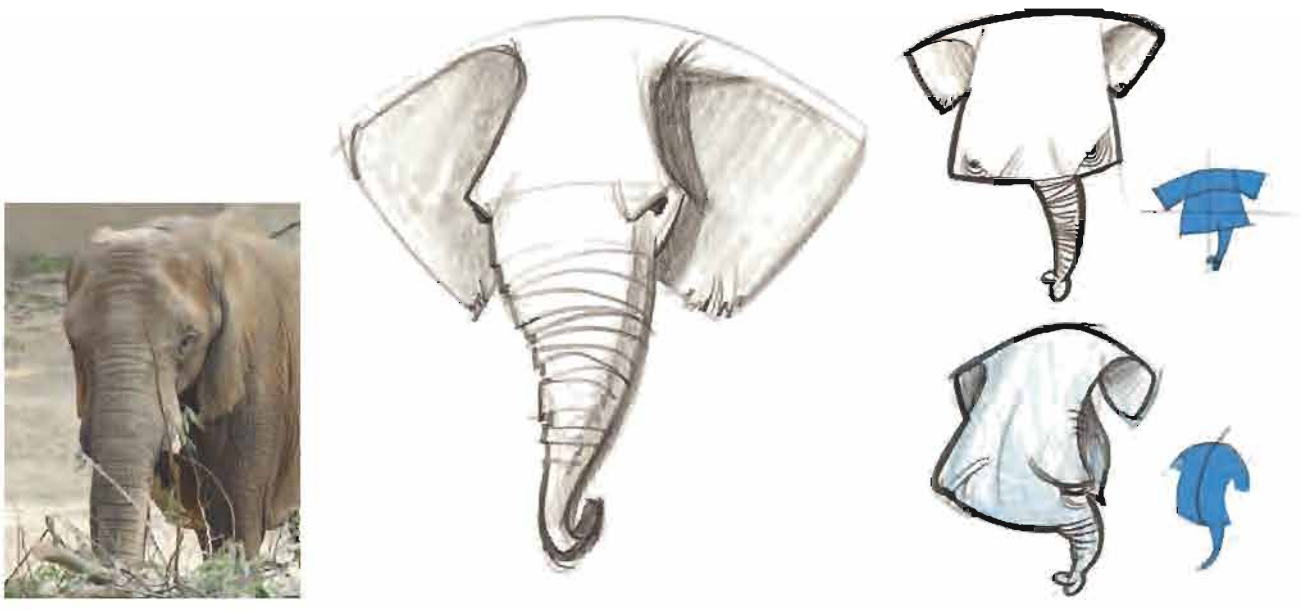
So in this design, the back is again straight and the curve is the belly. I used a rectangle for the shape of the head. When it comes to ratios, look at how large the body shape is in comparison to the head and feet.



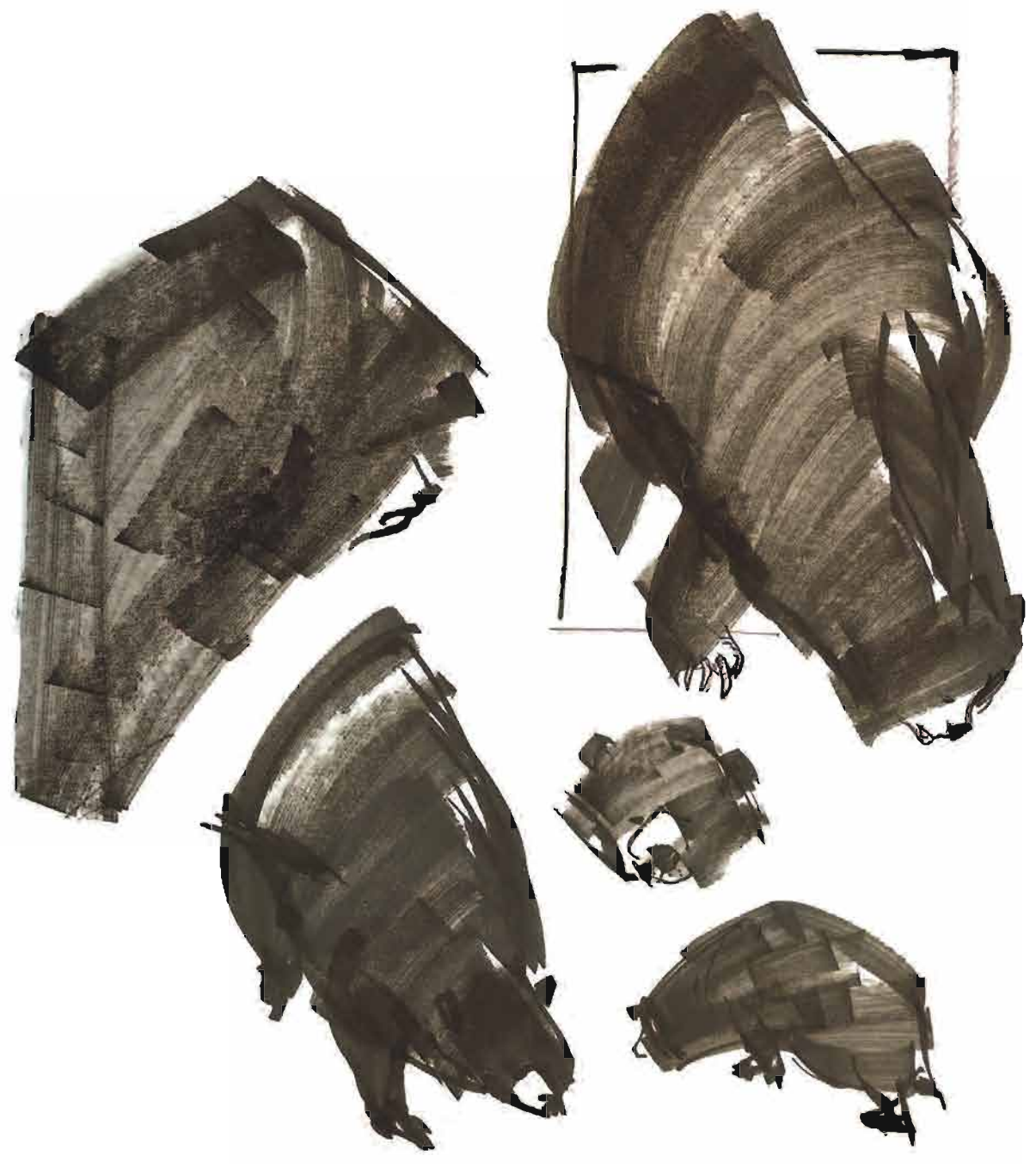
The blue bounding boxes are used as the overall shape of the elephant. The amount of the box occupied by the elephants' heads and their ears changes from one design to another.



My focus here is the character found in the elephant's eye. His inquisitive and untrusting visage implies that something is occurring behind him. The drawing is basically flat but some simple tone and surface line suggest depth.



Here is the head of the elephant. You can see how reference creates the more "real" design that then led to the others. The top right design is flat and the bottom right his some form applied to it by pushing the curve of the front. This curve turns the head to the left, allowing us to see the right side.

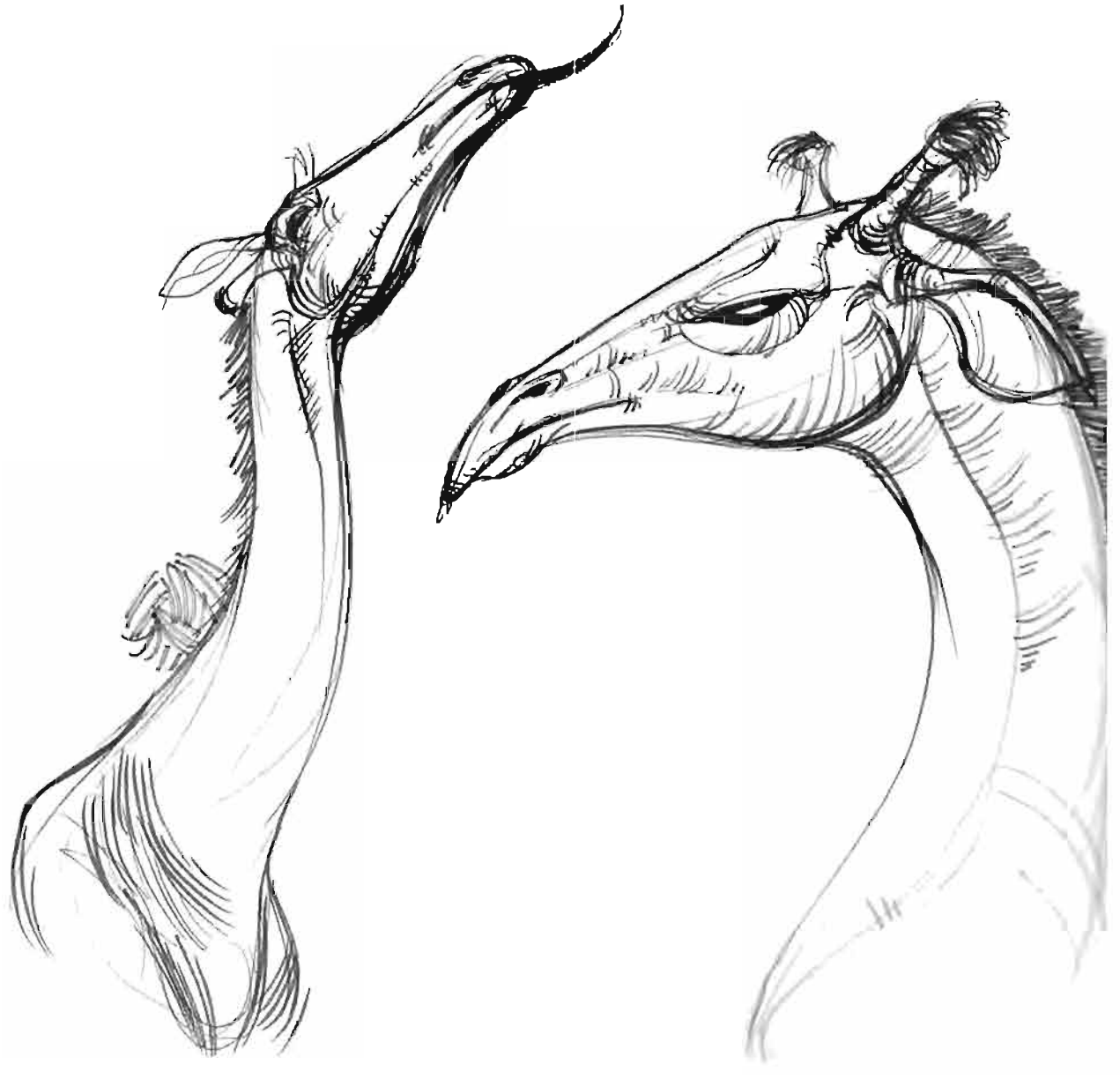


These rapid designs of an American Black Bear were all made possible through the understanding of simple shapes and silhouette. I used a fat calligraphic marker. I love the different personalities that came out of these impressionistic designs.

This ostrich's body is basically a FORCEFUL shape. The bottom of the body is a straight and the back is a curve. Notice how the arch of the back fluidly sweeps into the neck and tail feathers. The ostrich has a somewhat goofy look.

This ostrich, on the other hand, looks disgruntled. I made him stouter with the shortening and thickening of his legs. The body language and the stance are more alert and aggressive.

These interesting animals are Red River Hogs. You can see that with every drawing I went after different ideas. The top idea was the length of the nose. The second drawing, based on the change in direction the hog gave me, caused me to be inspired by the width of its snout. In the last image I brought out the triangular shape I saw in the profile. I made him angry and played up the mouth. I also shrunk the size of the legs to size up the head.



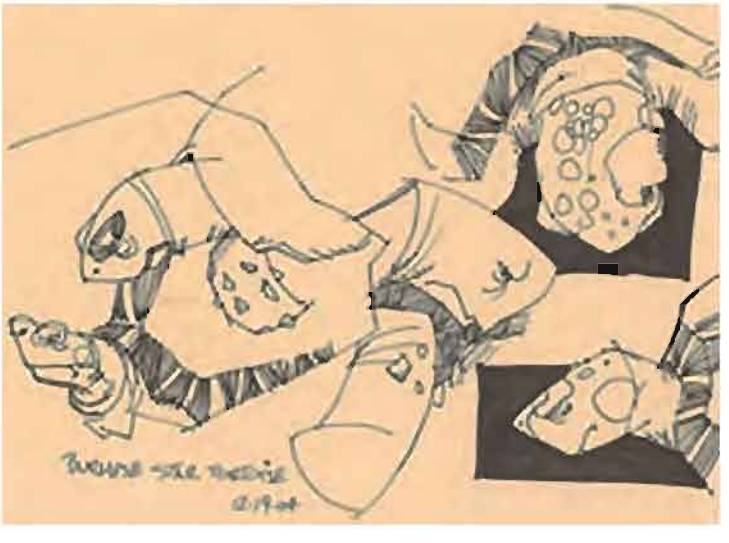
This page is the beginning of my giraffe explorations. Already, you can see how I have started to design reality. See form in the drawings shown on the left at the base and top of the neck. I sculpted in these areas to define the change in direction of the tube. The drawing on the right is a profile but I filled it with structure.

These drawings are great examples of process from study to design. What does that mean? Well, first I wanted to absorb the anatomy of the giraffe, its patterns, and forms. You can see that in the two drawings on the left. The drawing on the top right shows how I extracted the idea of sloping from the peak of the head down to the mouth as ONE idea. That takes abstracting what you are seeing and creating ideas and opinions. The giraffe's head, like the body of the Red River Hog, is triangular. See how I worked the bottom lip onto the shape of the triangle. Giraffe's have large eyes and eyelashes. You can see that I played up the size of the eyes and the smallness of the nostrils. The drawing on the bottom right shows me acknowledging the rhythm and strength of their necks.

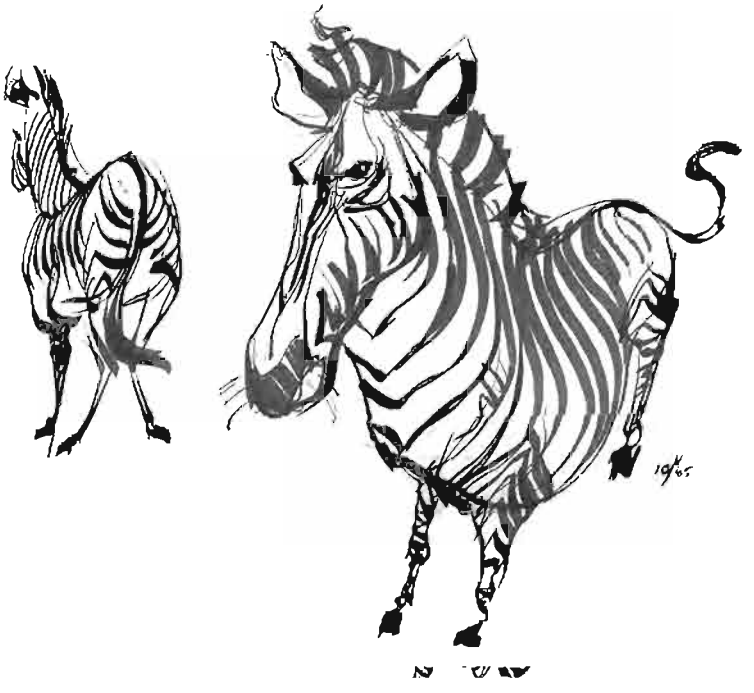
Look for the triangles in this design. There is the body as a whole. Then within the body there are multiple triangles in the limbs. They stay connected through force and rhythm. I then gave the giraffe a long and thin head.

These leaves are right from the zoo floor. What inspired me to use them for the giraffe designs was the spotted, tan pattern on the leaves. You can see this clearly in the head on the top left leaf. I love using found objects from the location of the design.

One way to clearly commence your design with animals is to approach their profile. I decided to remove the height of the giraffe and double triangled the head. Then, I added the pattern of the giraffe to the shape to accent its head.

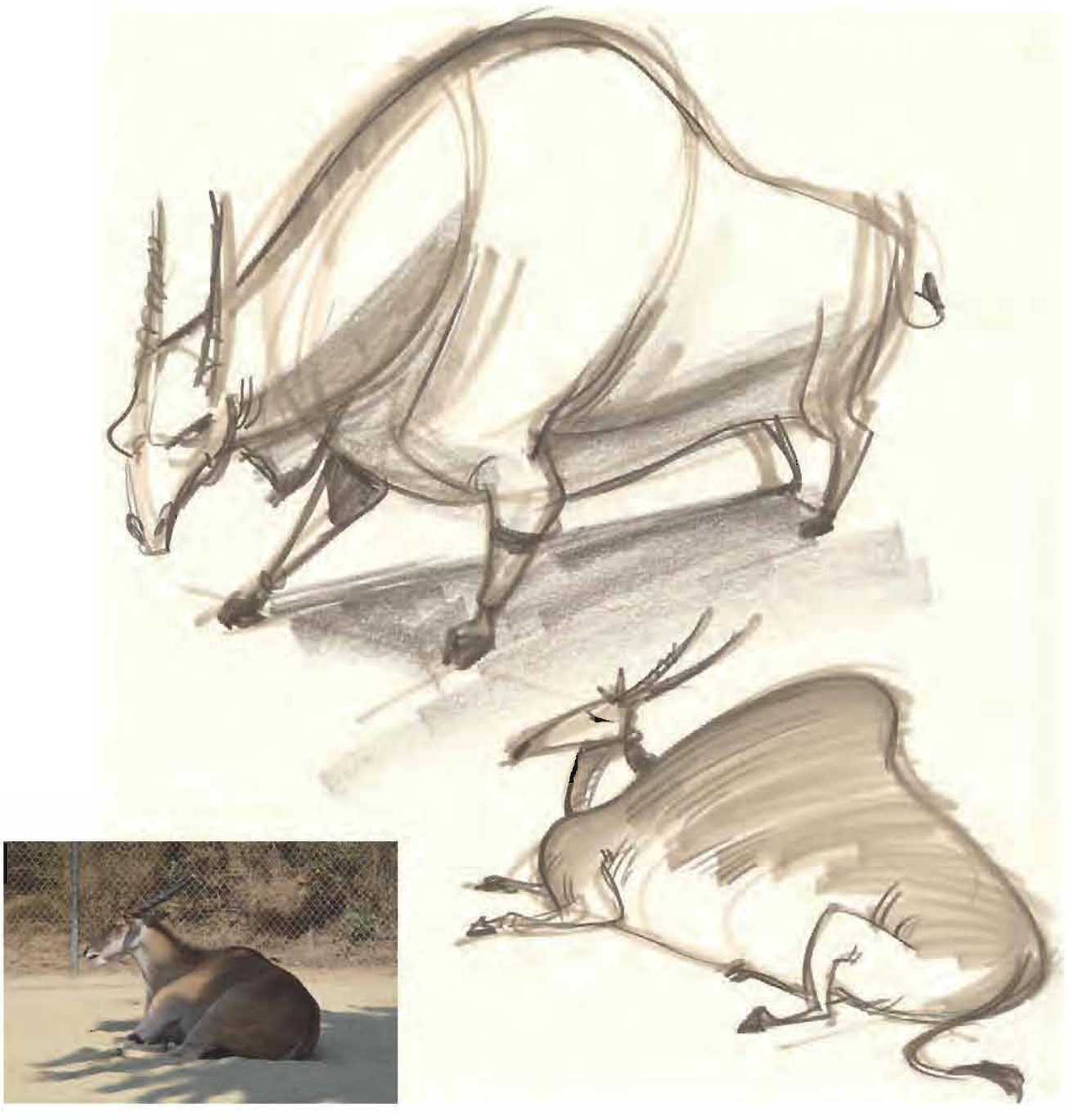


The tortoise designs were shape-based and then filled with information. All are different because of their ratio variations. Notice how clear the head shapes become when surrounded by the black shapes.

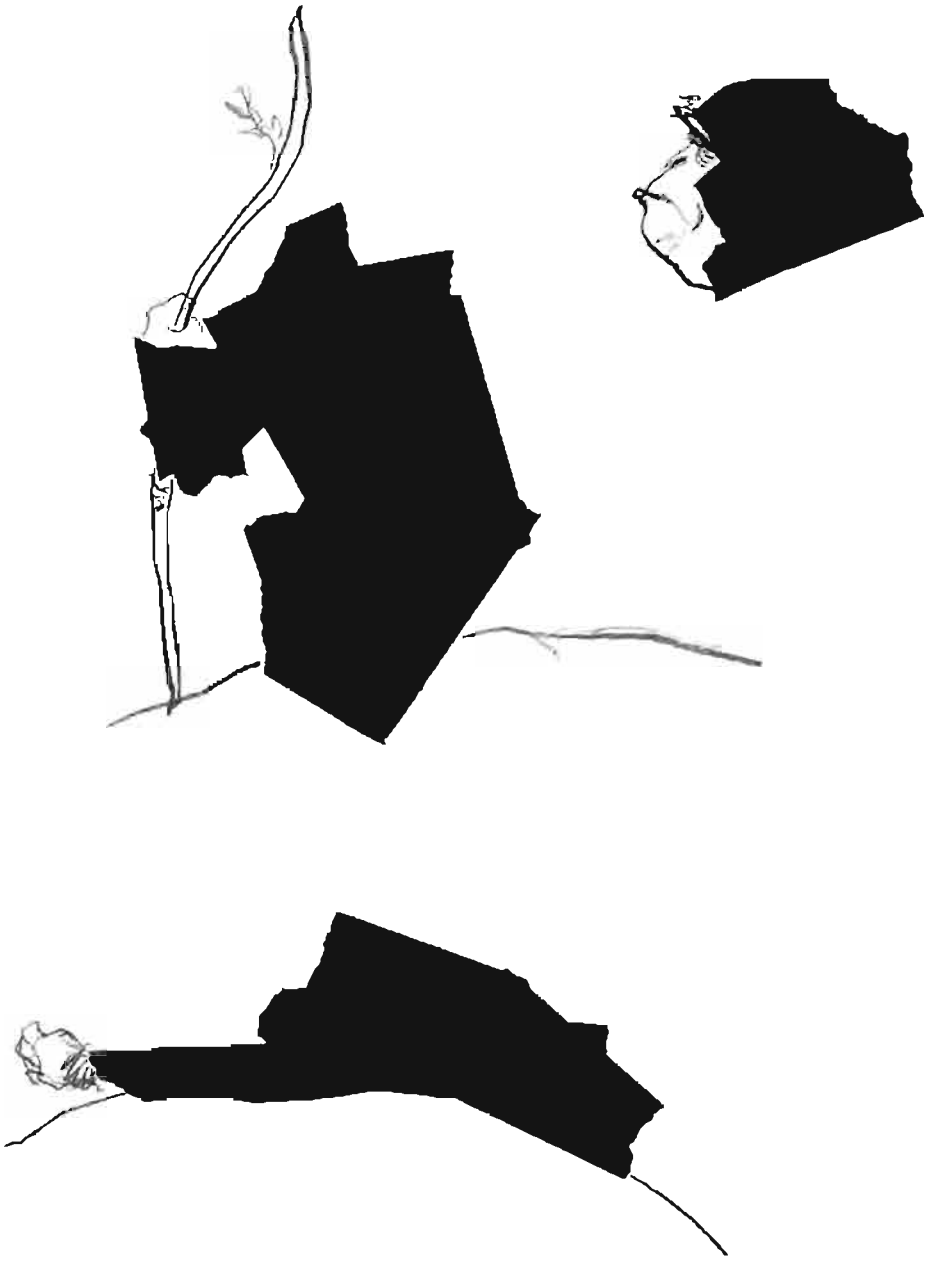


The drawing on the left is a more real take on this zebra. On the right, I pushed the size of the head and shrunk the legs and feet. Form is quick and easy with the zebra because of its natural stripes.

This is the Common Eland. What an interesting animal to draw. These first drawings were amazing explorations of its muscular proportions. Its face held long slitted eyes that in this moment reflected a look of suspicion.

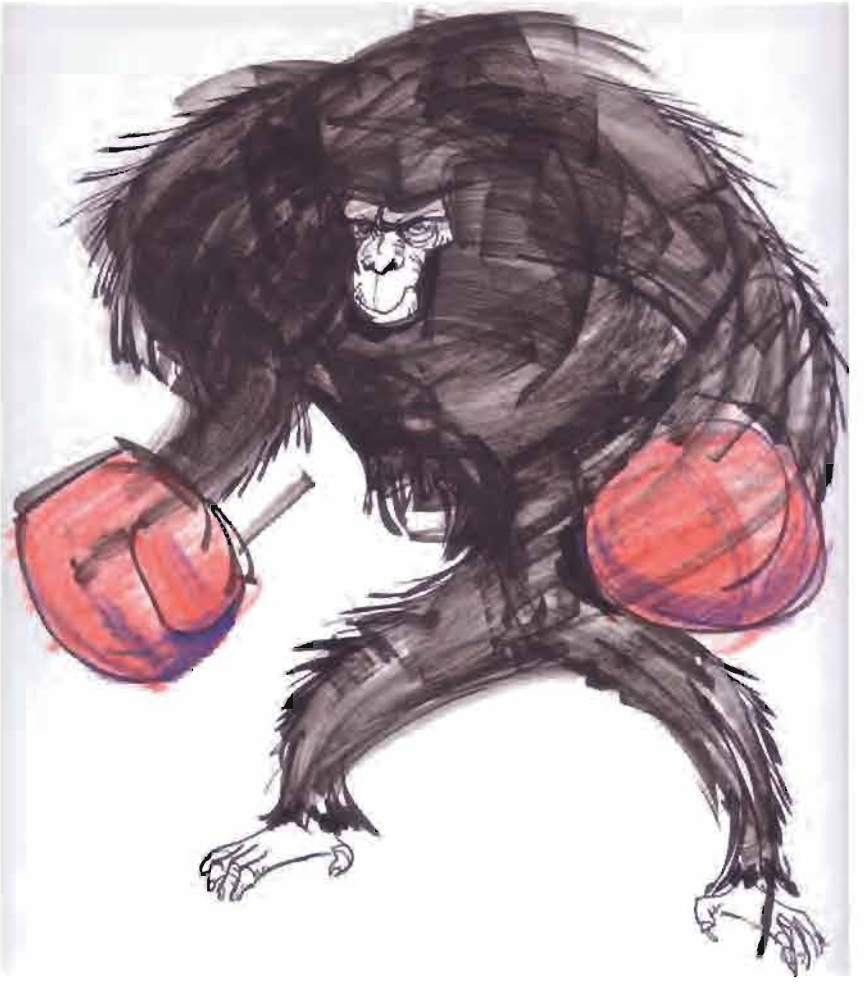


Going off of my first impression, I executed the top drawing, showing off this weightlifter-like physique. Lying on the ground, you can see how the shoulder dominated the mountain range of the Eland's reclined silhouette.



Bringing different supplies with you to the zoo could inspire your creativity. These chimps were designed with black masking tape and charcoal pencil. The crudeness of the tape allowed me to see more simply and make some clear decisions. First I went after the basic body silhouette with the tape and then added hands and faces with the pencil. The top right image reminds me of the movie *The Godfather*.

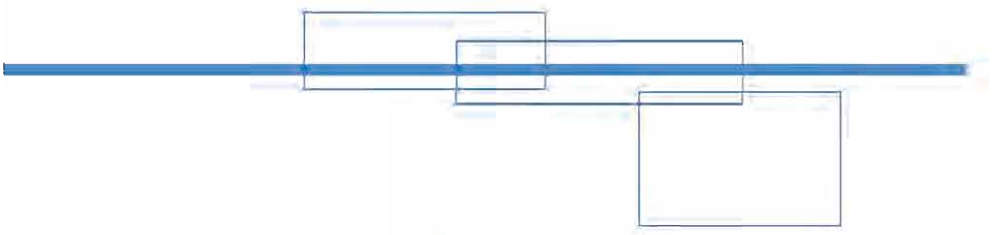
The image above is a silhouette of multiple chimpanzees. I ripped white tape to create the rough bottom that represented the terrain. So, in the drawing of the head, I simply stretched the proportions or ratio vertically. Look at how small the face is compared to the rest of the head.



This was done at the zoo also. Not sure what inspired the boxing idea but it was entertaining to design. The fat calligraphic marker inspired the large, sweeping strokes. His boxer-like face presents him ready for his next opponent.

Exercises

1. Know human anatomy and how to compare it to animals.
2. Look at the animals as imbued with humanity. What type of person is this animal?
3. Bring a book of celebrity photos with you to the zoo. See if you can combine the photos with the animals. Or, better yet, bring a family photo album with you!
4. Work with shapes!
5. Attempt combining two different animals.



Closing

I hope you have enjoyed this book. I had great pleasure in creating it. There are a great deal of artists out in the world who are fantastic at copying and rendering. Personally, this has never impressed me. Show me someone who is creative, that has opinion, and I am interested in what they have to say. I may love or hate someone's work, but I will admire it for its clarity of opinion.

> I paint objects as I think them, not as I see them.
> Pablo Picasso

I feel we all have opinion. Over time, some lose it more than others because they allow it to be taken from them. It then takes time to get it back. Allow yourself to find YOU. Do, buy, eat, talk, work, and play in ways that bring you happiness. Funny how sometimes the most difficult thing to do is to be yourself. Trust that you know you better than anyone else does, including me.

> I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free.
> Michelangelo

Draw what you want to draw, with the tools you like, when you like, and how you like. This is the fastest road to exposing your voice. I give you my voice in this book along with some of my friends' voices.

> Enjoy being opinionated. I look forward to hearing and seeing what you have to say about yourself and the world you live in
> Mike Mattesi

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Artist Bios

RIK MAKI

Originally from Vancouver, Canada, Rik Maki is one of the most prolific quick sketch artists in the animation and cartoon industry today. Eighteen years as character designer for every major feature animated film created at Walt Disney Feature Animation, his creative imagination combined with skill and dedication to the art form of drawing has brought him 13 feature film credits in such films as *Finding Nemo*, *Treasure Planet*, *A Bug's Life*, and *Dinosaur*.

Rik's clients include Walt Disney Feature Animation, Pixar Animation, Blue Sky Animation, Fox Animation Studios, DNA Helix, and Marvel, and his work has been published in *The Art of Lion King*, *The Art of Hercules*, *The Art of The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *The Art of A Bug's Life*, *The Art of Treasure Planet*, and in his sketchbooks "Scribblin' Away at Mike's Cafe," "Scribblin' on Scrap," and his latest sketchbook, "Scribblin' A–Z," all available from DigitalorNot.com and through Amazon.com.

Surrounded by technology and affectionately known as Mr. Old School, Rik just keeps drawing. His skill combined with his endless flow of creative ideas makes him one of the most popular character designers and character design instructors around. He can be reached at his studio Digital or Not — www.digitalornot.com.

STEPHEN SILVER

Aspiring to be a professional artist my whole life, I first got involved in drawing at the age of six when I found an artist's original sketchbook laying in my backyard. From that point on I knew that drawing would be my purpose in life. In 1992 I got my professional start drawing caricatures at amusement parks and then went on to establish my own illustration business and caricature concession company called Silvertoons. In 1996 I was hired as a graphic designer for the clothing company "No Fear." Then, in 1997 I was hired at Warner Bros. Television Animation as a character designer and later went on to develop the characters for Kevin Smith's *Clerks the Animated Series*, Disney's *Kim Possible*, and Nickelodeons *Danny Phantom*. I believe there are three treasures to success in life: Determination, Passion, and Desire. These are the three rules I live by, thereby giving me what it takes to keep on drawing. To see more of my work you can visit www.silvertoons.com and visit my blog @ www.stephensilver.blogspot.com. If you're interested in learning from me, the art of Character Design, I teach a one-on-one online character design course at SCHOOLISM.com

DEAN YEAGLE

Dean Yeagle started in animation in Philadelphia, PA. After marrying Barbara (also an artist, and musician) and the birth of their daughter, Becky, the need for actual money drove them to New York, and a job as designer, animator, and eventually director with one of the top animation houses in NYC. In 1986, with partner Nancy Beiman, he opened Caged Beagle Productions, Inc., a full-service animation studio, and has produced, directed, designed, and animated innumerable TV commercials and CD-ROMs, with clients across the United States and Europe. Dean was named Animator of the Year by the National Cartoonists Society.

He also does work for corporate clients, designing characters for various products, and works on a continuing series of children's books and designs the occasional toy. For the past 7 years he's contributed regular gag cartoons to *Playboy Magazine*, which has led to self-published sketchbooks and a pinup-girl character, Mandy, who has just been hired for her first international modeling gig.

JAKE KAZDAL

Jake Kazdal has been involved in the video games industry since 1990, when he worked at Nintendo of America as a gameplay counselor, playing games and answering phones helping people get through games like the original Legend of Zelda and Final Fantasy. After high school he attended the Vancouver Film School, graduating with a degree in Classical Animation in 1996 and starting work the next Monday as a production artist at Boss Game Studios in Redmond, WA. In 1999 Jake had the unique opportunity to join a new team as the only non-Japanese staff member, working for Tetsuya Mizuguchi at Sega in Tokyo, Japan. As a production 3D artist, concept artist, and animator, he cut his teeth working with some of the top talent in the industry, working on games such as Space Channel 5, Rez, and Astroboy. Inspired by the incredible design skills of his co-workers, in 2003 Jake decided to dedicate his career path to drawing, designing, and painting, and left Tokyo to attend the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, CA, where he focused on Industrial Design and Entertainment Design. Since March 2006 Jake has been a staff concept artist at Electronic Arts Los Angeles.

www.jakekazdal.com

GRISELDA SASTRAWINATA

I graduated from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena as the Valedictorian. I got my first job at IDTE/Starz Animation and I am currently working at Dreamworks as a visual development artist.

please visit my blog: www.griseldasastrawinata.blogspot.com

PATRICK MORGAN

Patrick, "Mr. Morgan" to his friends, not only loves to draw, but has an affinity for corn holders. (You know those little fork-type things that look like tiny little corn on the cobs.)

Patrick recently migrated from animation over to the video game industry as a concept designer at Heavy Iron Studios. Patrick also once saw a guy get struck by lightning. Really! No lie!! In the past, Patrick has worked for such companies as Disney, Nickelodeon, Warner Bros., and Sony. He has also released his first vinyl toy of his character "Whaleboy" and released his third art book. Check out more of his work and pick up some of his books at www.patrickmorgan.com, www.patrickmorganart.blogspot.com, or pick up your very own Whaleboy vinyl toy at www.whaleboytoy.com.

RAGNAR

Ragnar has been a character designer for video games, television, film, and books for the better part of a decade. He also writes, directs, and illustrates in the afore mentioned arenas. The clients that have hired him to do so include Disney, Nickelodeon, Warner Brothers, Sony, Dark Horse, Cartoon Network, and DC Comics. When not doing any of the above he paints and whatnot.

ERIN LEONG

Erin Leong is currently an Animator and Designer of video games at Leapfrog. In addition to games, she has a great interest in fashion illustration which she practices in her spare time.

MARC PERRY

Born and raised in the Bay Area, drawing since I was a kid being influenced by so many different artists and styles I came to Southern Cal to pursue I guess you would say a childhood dream to draw cartoons and work at a studio. I've been very fortunate to see that dream come true. I have many people to thank for all the great projects I've had the opportunity to work on and all the talented people I've had the privilege to work with

TEDDY NEWTON

Teddy Newton dropped out of the California Institute of the Arts in the early 1990s. His hopes were to become a filmmaker like his hero Bob Fosse. However, after a lack of planning, mixed with bad decision-making, Newton blindly went on to join up with the Disney Animation Studios. This dissatisfying experience left him disillusioned about the film industry all together. Nonetheless, his confidence was rapidly rebuilt with the understanding of his good friend and composer, Michael Giacchino. Giacchino hired Newton with the hopes they could tackle more independent animated film projects. Unfortunately, after only one year, the poorly managed company fell into bankruptcy. Desperate for cash, Newton sharply hooked a job on the Warner Bros animated feature, *The Iron Giant.* It was on that picture that director Brad Bird encouraged Newton to freely create rousing drawings to inspire fellow animators. Newton eventually left for the Pixar Animation Studios. There, Newton would create the look and feel for all of the major characters in the Academy Award winning film, *The Incredibles.* His designs included: Mr. Incredible, Frozone, Elastigirl, Mirage, Violet, Dash, Edna Mode (E), and

many others. His design skills were also instrumental in the creation of the dynamic animated end titles of *The Incredibles* and *Ratatouille*. Currently, Newton perseveres in his quest for independence. He and long time friend, Gregor Joackim continue to illogically bankroll Newton's life savings on costly black & white films with no credible stars

STEPH LABERIS

I have been drawing since I was old enough to steal stacks of typing paper from my Mom's home office. My early obsession with cartoons, toys, and video games came full-circle after I graduated from RISD and was fortunate enough to work in all three respective fields. I never planned on doing character design for a living; it was a very special teacher during my senior year of college who rekindled my passion for design and storytelling and I haven't looked back since. Of course, big props go to my friends and family for the endless support, patience, inspiration, and the occasional helpful critique or two.

I have only recently begun to do character design in Illustrator. When I look at a model (or anything from life really) I focus on two key elements: gesture and shape. Rendering and even line work are secondary to me. I find that the pen tool in Illustrator is great for creating the swooping, expressive shapes I'm looking for and that the limitations of working initially in flat color cause me to focus on the clarity of the silhouette, something often neglected with a lot of rendered character work I see currently.

I have been playing with the "papercut" technique for a little while and want to push the authentic look of it further, perhaps playing with fabric or wood textures and striving for more depth Achieving this look is relatively simple; once I have my initial design in Illustrator, I copy/paste each individual shape as a separate layer in Photoshop. I add drop shadows to the layers and overlay the paper textures (which come from my personal library of scanned papers, some of which I made myself from pulp). I then add a little texture with a chalk brush and I'm good to go.

Website: http://www.flyingclam.com
Blog: http://stephsketches.blogspot.com

JOHN NEVAREZ

John Nevarez is visual development artist for Imagi Animation Studios in Sherman Oaks, California, where he's currently providing background designs for *AstroBoy*. Prior to Imagi, John worked for Disneytoon Studios, working in various capacities as a storyboard artist and layout designer on such projects as *Kim Possible*, *Kronk's New Groove*, and the *Tinkerbell Movie*. He is also working on several personal projects as well as completing a personal sketchbook

john-nevarez.blogspot.com

MIKE DALEY

Michael Daley is excited and thankful to be a part of this fantastic drawing book. Working as a designer, illustrator, and animator for various companies, Michael currently resides in San Francisco where he works as an animation art director at Leapfrog. He enjoys sketching, riding bikes, playing chess, and traveling.

Visit his site at http://www.biocreep.com and his blog at http://biocreep.blogspot.com.

PHIL RYNDA

Phil Rynda is currently a Character Designer at Cartoon Network Studios. In 2007 he was awarded an Emmy for his character design work on *The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy*. You can see some of his work at www.rynda.com.

DEANNA MARSIGLIESE

Deanna is a Canadian animation artist with a strong passion for illustration and conceptual design. Deanna's pieces are created with a variety of media; her favorites being ink, marker, and gouache. She has experience in various facets of the animation industry, designing characters for both television and feature film.

Visit her site at www.pinkydee.blogspot.com

MODELS

I want to personally thank the models whose photos were used in this book.

John Tucker	Pirate and cowboy
Nicole Stafaci	Pink and Boa Woman
Mark Russo	Matador
David Roon	Gangster
Mike Schmidt	Barbarian and Bachus
Jennifer Fabos Patton	Cowgirl www.jenniferpatton.net

A special thanks to characterdesign.com and the drawingclub.com for the great character photos of the models that assisted in the creation of this book.

SUGGESTED READING

Force: Dynamic Life Drawing for Animators, Second Edition, by Mike Mattesi

Reportage 01, by Mike Mattesi

Manwatching, A Field Guide to Human Behavior, by Desmond Morris

Comics and Sequential Art, by Will Eisner

Cartoon Modern: Style and Design in 1950s Animation (Hardcover), by Amid Amidi

Art And Flair of Mary Blair, by John Canemaker

"The Cat on a Hot Thin Groove: The Complete Collection of 78rpm Artwork," from the *Legendary Record Changer Magazine*

Desene: Sketches & Scribbles, by Ovi Nedelcu

The Art of Silver, by Stephen Silver

The Art of The Incredibles, by Mark Cotta Vaz, Brad Bird, and John Lasseter

Ronald Searle (Hardcover), by Ronald Searle

Drawing Blood: Forty-five Years of Scarfe Uncensored, by Gerald Scarfe

The Art of Mulan (Hardcover), by Jeff Kurtti

The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation, by Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas

Drawers, Claire Wendling

The Weatherly Guide to Drawing Animals, by Joe Weatherly

The Art of Animal Drawing: Construction, Action Analysis, Caricature (Dover Books on Art Instruction, Anatomy), by Ken Hultgren

The Art of Animal Character Design, by David Colman and Daniel Morris

The Art of Star Wars, Episode II — Attack of the Clones, by Mark Vaz

The *Complete Book of Caricature*, by Bob Staake

Mandy's Shorts, by Dean Yeagle

Rowland Emett, Form Punch to Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and Beyond

Stars, by Sebastian Kruger

WEBSITES

www.drawingforce.com
www.enterartaacad com
www.characterdesigns.com
www.thedrawingclub.com
www.characterdesign.blogspot.com
www.drawingboard.org
www.cartoonbrew.com

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